

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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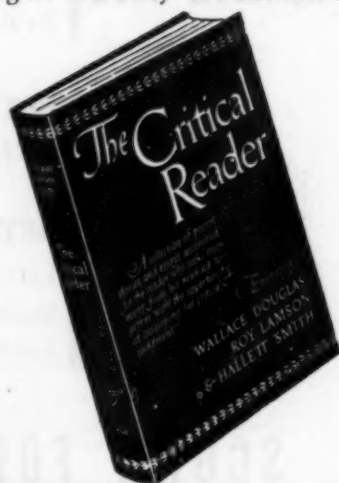
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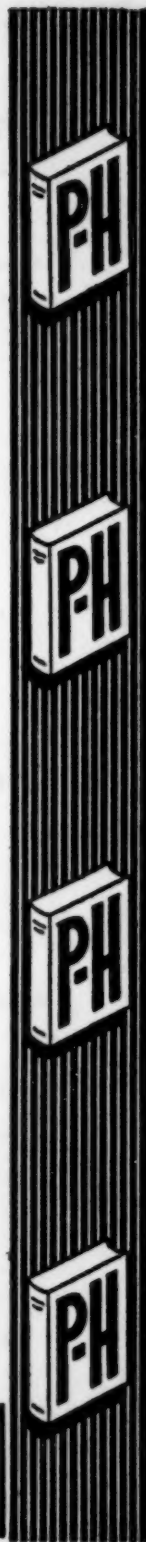
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COLLEGE ENGLISH

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Symphonic Drama

PAUL GREEN¹

I

SOME years ago I became interested in a Negro settlement on the outskirts of a certain southern white-folks university town. This settlement consisted of four or five hundred people and incorporated into itself almost everything good and bad, cruel and hopeful, superstitious and orthodox, to be found in any like collection of people anywhere below the Mason and Dixon Line.

Here was the turgid upboiling and rich manifestation of humanity with all the special intensity of emotion, wilfulness, and wild flarings of the imagination which Negro folk life in America so fully provides. I dreamed and pondered over this settlement. I wanted to give dramatic expression to this environment and active milieu of life. I wanted to put these people on the stage in dramatic form.

Certain decisions must be made. A central gathering place must be established in the play—a place where the people would be brought in and where

they could discharge their dramatic story message, where they could unload their personalities, as it were, in the scene and pass out to get another load of the same and return or not.

What would the center be? First I thought of that gathering place of communal life, the church. But, as I considered, it offered certain stiff and formal difficulties. Next I thought of the corner grocery store. But, owing to its pragmatic being and definite purpose, I found it too narrow and confining. What about a barbecue stand? I could see the people eating there, hear their loud guffaws as jokes were cracked. See a quarrel being picked. There comes the strolling form of the law. But, no, that won't do. Too many representatives of Negro life, especially the more delicate and feminine side of its society, would be excluded.

I finally chose a boarding-house—a proper-sized boarding-house. And for freedom of movement and contrasting mass of bodies and lights and shadows I would need several levels of playing action. Therefore a boarding-house with a porch on it. And, moreover, there should

¹ Author of *In Abraham's Bosom* (Pulitzer prize-winner) and of many other plays; professor of philosophy in the University of North Carolina.

be a yard and some shade trees—one shade tree—in front. The walls of the rooms in this house should be opened so that the inner workings of this dwelling as a habiting place for human souls could be depicted as the story required. Also why not a lean-to at the back into which we could progue our sight? It could be a level higher than the room in front of it. This was good. And, if necessary, I could bring in another small center of action—the local barbershop shack. Yes, that would be right. So off at the left of the yard I moved a tiny outbuilding where the light could cast its interested eye now and then and discover to the audience whatever bits of action we might be interested in.

And let a street cross at the right where the moody and restless life of the people could be emphasized and illustrated as the play required. So now I had enough of home, with intimate cells, in which the dramatic honeybee could work.

The scene had four playing levels then—the yard, the front porch, the main interior of the house, and the higher lean-to level at the rear. In addition, there was the playing spot of the little barbershop outbuilding and the highway of action on the road to the right.

In and around this boarding-house I now collected my characters, some seventy-five or a hundred of them, all representative of a cross-section of Negro life. Among them were a preacher, a mother or two, a granny woman, a voodoo doctor, several convicts, a harlot, a beautician, a sport, a blind musician, several day laborers, cooks, an undertaker, several pairs of sweethearts, a salesman of death insurance—and men, women, and children. What about the time? I must choose an hour and a day in which it would be natural for this Negro life to

coagulate and congregate itself into such a setting. Obviously a Saturday night. It must not be in winter, for then my characters could not do their stuff out-of-doors. So summer was the result—a warm summer night when one week's hard work had ended and another week's had not yet begun. At such a time the story germ would sprout quietly, develop normally, and break into a final bloom of explosiveness. Then, after this, normal life would return to quiescence again and the play be over.

As I worked at the drama, I felt again and again that I was involved in the same sort of enterprise as a composer driving forward his composition for some eighty or a hundred instruments. The whole body of the work must be kept propelling itself onward by means of the individual instrumentations which came forward to personal fulfilment, returned and gave place to others, and they in turn likewise. Motifs must be developed, thematic statements made and exploited, and a ferment of symphonic creativity must be kept brewing to self-realization. And all to be sternly controlled by the architectonic power of the story line. Whatever failed to advance the story would not be used. For, after all, drama is storytelling, of whatever sort it is, storytelling in action. Of course a little functional and lyrical decoration could be indulged in now and then. But only beauty spots, as it were, to be tinted in on the face of the whole.

And the *idée fixe*, say, as in a Beethoven or Berlioz symphony, the sensed and felt and inner natural form, call it even the melodic line, whether submerged or surfaced—must control matters.

The story line was a creature alive indeed. And even as the will-o'-the-wisp, he lived in and inhabited the scene. There the little creature enters from the

street. He moves about the yard. The house calls to him. He enters there. He takes possession of a room for awhile, and the human beings indwelling there are disturbed and thrown into fits even at his galvanic appearance—an appearance called up out of their own deep desires and activities, their clashing wills and urges in themselves—just as the violins flutter and cry out in sweet stridency or joyful pain as the burden of the symphonic movement develops or comes to being in their vibrating and shaken bosoms.

2

I kept searching for a term of definition and interpretation to describe my play as I worked at it.

I found that in trying to express the inner lives and turmoilings of my Negro community I was having to call upon nearly all the available elements in modern theatrical art. And there were plenty of them. Folk song and poetry were needed here. Likewise the dance and pantomime and chorus voices. Even the mental speech of the grisly microphone and echo chamber could be used to get completely inside the soul life of some of my disturbed and vitalized people. Moments of horrification would call for masks. And ever there was the dynamic flow and modulation of light to accompany the human behavior at work. Light that would illuminate a volatile and advancing story point, and in that illumination the mind of the appreciator could read the message clear. The fabled fire in the Scriptures was like this light, the furnace fire in which the Hebrew children once stood all bright and glorified.

And always there was music—music!

"Music drama" didn't seem the right term for the play. Ballad opera it certainly was not. Nor opera. "Festival play"

was too loose and misnaming. "Lyric drama" lacked entirety. Finally "symphonic drama" seemed right. Yes, a "sounding-together" in the true meaning of the Greek term. The term seemed a little highfalutin, and that I deplored. But it was nearer what I wanted than anything else. And so I adopted it and have continued to use it for other like plays I have written since.

3

I found in the writing of this Negro drama that by the symphonic use of the various elements of the theater, especially music, there came a freedom and fullness of possible story statement not otherwise to be had in dealing with large groups of people in action. Short cuts and intensifications could be indulged in which the audience accepted instantly. Conventions could be quickly established and the story beginnings could be hatched out of an obstructive matrix without much ado.

In this kind of theater, too, time could be telescoped through a symbol—even could become that symbol. Space might be compressed or expanded, say, like the breathing of some huge and delicate accordian of the mind. Tomorrow is already here. A voice of the inner chorus commentator out of the life of my Negro village could say so. And in the thickened moody and musically charmed environment, in the climate of credibility established, the audience would agree.

There was a nemesis in my Negro play. A huge and oncoming highway was being built by the white man across the earth and was aimed straight at this Negro settlement. The deep reverberations of dynamite exploding in the hills, clearing the way for this road, sounded ominously and constantly nearer as the drama proceeded.

Passions and hates and loves and fears and whorings were fecundating in this village. During the play murder was committed in the boarding-house. Then came the wham-wham of a policeman's stick, and the hoarse great voice of the law was heard bellowing like Behemoth through the valley. Culprits and innocent ones ran this way and that in fear. The Golem tread of justice and retribution came nearer. The reverberations on the distant road sounded closer, louder. Nature herself became sick, upset, and violent. A fierce wind whoomed and whistled among the shacks in the valley and around our particular boarding-house. The limbs of the shade tree in the yard twisted and swung like a gesticulating maenadic. A final and terrific explosion occurred in the street at the right. A pandemonium of shrieking and lamentations of the people rose in the valley! The moon dropped down the sky like a shot. And then, with the echoes falling away, the tumult and the terror died. The scene faded gently and musically out. From the darkness came a low and fervent chanted prayer of the persecuted and disordered people. A few heartbeats of time and no more, and the light swam up again.

The iron-snouted machine-age road had arrived. The nemesis was there. It had plowed its revengeful way through the settlement like a cruel steel coulter through an anthill. The old boarding-house had been pushed aside. The entrails of furniture and a piece of bedding or two spilled out along the torn earth. Because of the depravity, the sinfulness, and causeless misery of these sorrowful ones the road had taken its toll.

A dozen or more striped convicts were working, digging away on this road now, slinging their picks and bringing them down, and ever bringing them down in

the white blazing sun. The heat of August shimmered across the land; Lazy Lawrence danced his fiendish monkey dance in the sun. The sweat poured down, the only cooling dampness in the world for the mourners on that road. On a stump to the left a guard squatted, drowsy, vapid, like a toad. The rifle in the crook of his arm kept alert, its muzzle warned like an eye, it threatened. The convicts dug on and on, their faces set down the infinite stretch of that cruel road, a road that reached from the rising to the setting sun. And as their picks came down against the earth with a thud, a husky desperate groaning song burst from their baked lips, carrying on and carrying on over the long deadening hours of pain.

In this form of symphonic drama the convicts and the digging had become the road.

The form seemed right then for the expression of such group life, of setting forth the relationships of individuals and their fellows, of masses and crowds affected, energized and motivated as they would be by some centripetal idea and dramatic intent—some story of tradition, of folk inheritance and legend, some famous native character or group of characters splurging themselves or their heritage.

4

So I wrote the piece out to the best of my ability. Then began the peddling of it for Broadway. I experienced to the fullest the torturous way to production so often endured by American playwrights. I would have been much wiser of course to have found some amateur group and perfected the production with them first. But, no, it must be Broadway or nothing. I think I have learned better since. Some half-dozen managers were

intrigued by the play, bought it and owned it in turn, paying five hundred dollars down, fiddling with the script six months and dropping it. For three years they did so. Finally one more foolhardy than the rest, a woman, undertook it.

The play arrived at the Cort Theatre on Forty-eighth Street in New York. From the beginning on that autumn night everything went wrong. Our prize exhibit of twenty-two choral voices in the pit, flanked by a drum and a clarinet to provide the basic musical folk-stratum, went dead on that opening night. All its fire went out. All sense of Negro revival participatingness had vanished. It was a cold group, frozen, stiff, automatic, and unable to fuse itself into the body of the play. And yet Dolphe Martin's score of notated vocables was warm and eager enough.

The actors likewise played separate and aloof solitaire. The voice of the Almighty (the white man's Law), which had been placed high in the scenery aloft by means of a loud-speaker, blew a fuse in the midst of its stern admonition to the struggling and wayward Negro villagers. The already puzzled audience broke into laughter.

And all the while there was to be no relieving intermission. Using my prerogative as author, I had been bull-headed on this point. This was to be a through train, like the train that took old Daniel away in the song, and there would be no stopping until it arrived at its final destination, either heaven or hell.

It was to be hell.

I was walking restlessly up and down in the lobby of the theater. I kept going out to the sidewalk to see how the weather was up the narrow canyon of the dark sky and then back again listening, waiting for any sound of encouraging ap-

plause from within the auditorium. None came out. But a man came out instead, irate, hot, and bothered. He was a big fellow and to my then disordered imagination looked at least seven feet long.

"Play or no play," he said; "I'm going to smoke."

It was Bob Benchley, and I knew we were sunk.

Two days later word was received that Mr. Schubert wanted his theater come Saturday night for another show. Trembling and afraid, I went over to see him. He was gracious and humane and unsmiling.

"Your drama lacks entertainment," he said.

"But if we could only keep it going another week. Give it a chance. Maybe it would catch on. It's a sort of new form, you know. Atkinson's review was not bad. I have a wire here from him praising it. And Mrs. Isaacs of *Theatre Arts* thinks highly of it."

"I understand how you feel," he said, "but I already have another show booked to come into the Cort right away." His voice grew a little hard. "A full-length play without an intermission is unthinkable. The audience won't stand for it."

"Won't sit for it," I corrected inwardly.

I looked at his emotionless face. There was something familiar about him. Then I knew. It was his snow-white collar and his black exact tie. In the very play he was kicking out one of the characters was a Negro mortician. Mr. Schubert's collar and tie were identical with the Negro's and as solemn and unfeeling. The office was a morgue then, and I was glad to get out of it. So *Roll Sweet Chariot* rolled out of the theater on Saturday night and into silence.

5

I tried this sort of symphonic drama a couple of other times on Broadway. Once the cool and loyal judgment of Cheryl Crawford, the enthusiasm of Harold Clurman and the Group Theatre, the fine direction of Lee Strasburg and the resilient and theaterwise music of Kurt Weill—all helped to mend matters. But they were not enough, and *Johnny Johnson* likewise was marked down as a failure. I still remember with appreciation though that the critics' circle gave it a tombstone vote of confidence for its obituary.

Then there was *Native Son*, which I co-authored with Richard Wright out of his dynamic and powerful novel of the same name. This play was symphonic in its use of music and musicalized sound effects especially. The undismayed personal dominance and theatricality of Mr. Orson Welles helped salvage the piece and drive it across to some sort of crippled success. It ran in New York for several months and then continued around on the road for a year or two. It is now being played in different parts of the world in various translations, and I hate to think that its meaning to foreign audiences is not its dramatic reality but its propaganda.

I have written several symphonic dramas away from Broadway and have had better success in staging them in outdoor theaters than in indoor ones. Down on lonely Roanoke Island in North Carolina Sir Walter Raleigh's colony perished in 1587. A hundred and twenty-one men, women, and children disappeared from the face of the earth without a whisper as to their fate. For many years I thought about this mystery as material for a symphonic drama. With local devotion and a great deal of WPA and Federal

Theatre help we built an outdoor amphitheater there close on the quiet waters of Roanoke Sound. And in a setting of yellow sands and live oak trees we opened *The Lost Colony* some eleven years ago. The play will soon be in rehearsal again for its annual summer season. Through these years hundreds of thousands of people have come to see this project in communal theater and to hear the old English music, the folk song and hymn tunes of our musical heritage, and to see the native Indian dances—all part of the symphonic drama. The little fishing village of near-by Manteo furnishes us with many actors, New York likewise. They all meet here, more than two hundred of them, year after year, and put on this play, their play. And the miracle to me is that the box office has so far provided enough salary to give each participant a modest living wage.

Another symphonic drama already written is *The Highland Call*. It is designed for production in the Cape Fear Valley in North Carolina. This valley is a home and center of the Scottish settlement in the United States. And recently there among the tall pines outside the city of Fayetteville close by Fort Bragg we selected a site for our outdoor theater. And here, before long, it is my hope, the story of the Scottish heroine, Flora MacDonald, with the music and ballads and dance of the early Scottish settlers in the New World, will be played nightly under the stars.

The Common Glory at Williamsburg, Virginia, is another example of this type of drama with which I have recently been working. This play covers six years in the life of Thomas Jefferson and is concerned mainly with his efforts to further the creation of democratic government in these United States. This summer will

mark the third season of the drama. And so far it has been highly successful as regards attendance and box-office income. The policy of using local actors, strengthened by some Broadway professional ones, is used here just as in the case of *The Lost Colony* and the planned-for *Highland Call*.

At the present there is talk of a symphonic drama for the sesquicentennial celebration in Washington, D.C., in 1950. I have done a lot of traveling back and forth for that idea. And at night I have sat out in beautiful Rock Creek Park listening to sounds and planning the ideal outdoor theater there in which the character of George Washington, for whom the city is named, could be brought to vital and strapping life again. A committee of citizens and political figures is waiting to hear from Congress as to the monetary wherewithal, and we are all praying.

And up and down the length of California I have traveled, stopping at every old mission from San Francisco to San Diego looking for a site, a home for a future great passion play of the Southwest. It seems now as if somewhere in the quiet and brooding mountains of Ojai Valley a place will be found for building the most beautiful outdoor theater in the world, and there under the dry and rainless stars the religious and inspiring story of the early padres in that wide land could be restated and relived.

6

This type of drama which I have elected to call symphonic seems to be fitted to the needs and dramatic genius of the American people. Our richness of tradition, our imaginative folk life, our boundless enthusiasm and health, our singing and dancing and poetry, our lifted hearts and active feet and hands, even our multitudinous mechanical and machine means for self-expression—all are too outpouring for the narrow confines of the usual professional and killing-expensive Broadway play and stage. But they can be put to use in the symphonic drama and its theater. It is wide enough, free enough, and among the people cheap enough for their joy and popular use.

The idea is apparently spreading. I hope so. Hardly a day passes that I don't get a letter from some section of the United States asking me to come and write a symphonic drama and help build a theater to stage it in. Well, there seems to be a challenge here to American playwrights all right—and to our actors, scene designers, technicians, and dancers and singers as well. It begins to look as if the clogged-up and hobbled dramatic talents now going to waste in the hollow haunts of Broadway have no real excuse longer to continue their wastage. The people are waiting for these talents. The people need them. And the true theater must live and be among the people.

Adam's Soliloquy in Book X of "Paradise Lost"

KESTER SVENDSEN¹

I WISH to discuss this soliloquy as a dramatic monologue, not only for what it reveals of Adam but *as* a revelation of Adam, as a monologue. I wish also to show something of its structural relationship to the rest of the poem. I am concerned with the logic of the passage as a dramatization and as a part of a long narrative poem.

Adam's soliloquy is the longest single speech in *Paradise Lost*, excluding, of course, the narratives by Raphael and Michael, which are not proper speeches at all in the dramatic sense of the word. One is surprised to find so little about this soliloquy in Milton scholarship and criticism. It has been annotated, to be sure; and the echoes of Shakespeare, biblical material, Greek philosophy, theological disputation, and scholasticism have been remarked by the editors. Some attention has been paid the dramatic function of these hundred and twenty-four lines (X, 720-844), but very little analysis has been brought to bear upon the soliloquy as a poetic structure within the framework of the epic. In many ways this is the most significant single passage in the poem; and, if the suggestions advanced in this paper prove valid, the soliloquy will be seen not only as a most important stage in the development of Adam's character but as a partial justification for the eleventh and twelfth books, which have often been criticized as padding.

In the first place, Adam's soliloquy is

a tragic recognition scene, obligatory to the plot. The debate in Hell, as has been remarked, bears very little relation to the action of the poem; but this debate of Adam with his conscience is a necessary result of the Fall and the prelude to his emotional maturity. The psychological experience of the soliloquy is a catharsis as a process of discovery; as Adam learns more about himself, he purges off the grosser corruption of his will. But the total experience is one of creation rather than excretion. The purging is only a preliminary to growth, the growth of Adam's faith in God, a faith that he lost when he yielded to Eve and regains only after Eve has taught him that his deity is a God of mercy as well as of justice. But at the conclusion of the soliloquy Adam is in the depths of despair; his tortured acceptance of God's justice leaves him finally flat upon the ground. Only after he has listened to Eve's prayers does he realize that God will listen to his.

The soliloquy is also the great justification scene of the poem. This is the place where the promise in the opening lines of Book I is made good. Adam must recognize his guilt and accept it as just; he must also receive Eve as a partner in his guilt, not merely as Satan's partner in evil. The strategy of the passage is debate: Adam divides against himself; reason struggles with passion; he calls up excuses and evasions, only to argue them down, his reason gradually emerging to keep him honest. Yet the process is not merely logical; if it were, the dramatic

¹ University of Oklahoma.

features would be lost in a desert of theological disputation. One can perceive an emotional, as well as an intellectual, progress in Adam's situation. He moves from despair and grief to resentment, to uncertainty, to fear and horror, to desperate irony, and finally, to terror. His last state before Eve's appearance is one of pathos, self-consciously expressed by Adam when he says that the groves and dales were accustomed to "farr other Song" than the present lament.

This is one of the loneliest scenes in literature. Adam is completely isolated, alienated from God on account of his sin and from Eve because he cannot at this stage consider her as anything but an instrument of Satan. Even the animals glare at him as they pass. Hidden in gloomiest shade, Adam moves in a spiritual darkness as well. He has nowhere to turn and no one to turn to except his conscience. His sense of guilt is his only companion, and he wrestles with it as with an adversary.

Adam begins with a consciously ironic contrast between his present and former state. "O miserable of happie . . . mee . . . now becom / Accurst of blessed." The antithesis in the opening lines strengthens the conflict and promotes the reader's awareness of the division, which is the major method of the soliloquy. That Adam is still in the grip of pride appears from his concern, at first, not for posterity but for what posterity will say of him. Later his concern is genuine, and when he answers one question with another, "What if thy Son / Prove disobedient, and reprov'd, retort, / Wherefore didst thou beget me," the analogy shows that posterity sticks in his mind, and the reader is prepared for a return to the theme.

Adam's consciousness of the contrast between his innocence and his guilt

reaches a little peak of grief when he apostrophizes the lost Eden, and then shifts abruptly to resentment, addressing his creator with a presumption that reveals the evil of pride and corrupt will still at work in him: "O fleeting joyes / Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes. / Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay, / To mould me Man?" It is this repeated shift in subject or point of view that helps to keep the soliloquy fluid and active, as well as to convey the confusion and conflict in Adam's mind. After tortured argument, he accepts the justice as well as the superiority of God and says: "Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair." He reaches a calm that is broken immediately by his uncertainty about the delay of death's stroke. He still does not understand the nature of his punishment because he is too obsessed with his own anguish. The pain is chiefly in his mind, and, until it is purged of some of its carnal fear and insecurity, the mind will be darkened. The doubts that assail him, provoked by his sin, are, however, evidence of an active mind. Adam is on his way back intellectually, though he is still floundering in emotional upheaval. Morbidly he debates with himself the death of the soul with the body and concludes: "All of me then shall die." But this decision does not diminish his growing awareness of "endlesse miserie," his feeling that his whole existence will but repeat the conditions of his present chaos. Now his concern for posterity becomes unselfish; he wishes not so much to avoid the curses of those he addresses as his sons as, in ironical language, to waste the patrimony on himself. It is consistent with the psychological experience here that this genuine concern should lead Adam to another rebellious question against God's justice: "Why should all mankind / For one

mans fault thus guiltless be condemn'd, / If guiltless?" The rebellion dissipates under honest self-criticism as he realizes that what he desires and what he fears alike destroy all hope of refuge. He concludes, despairingly: "O Conscience, into what Abyss of fears / And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which / I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!"

It was still daylight when Adam began his struggle with conscience. Now it is night, a night different from others because his sense of guilt represents all things with double terror. He curses his creation now, not his creator, imagining in his weakened judgment that he can separate the act from the actor. As he laments the different song to which the hills and dales once made answer, Eve approaches, and, to judge from Adam's savage outburst, she startles him. Except for one side glance, Adam has not thought of Eve in the preceding lines of the soliloquy. Now the full force of his despair and frustration is visited upon her as a tangible form of them and is then extended to all womankind. In his anger he challenges God for his motive in creating woman. Finally, he generalizes about marriage in a way that seems ridiculous, in view of his inexperience with reluctant parents or rival lovers:

Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a farr worse, or if she love, withheld
By Parents, or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, alreadie linkt and Wedlock-bound
To a fell Adversarie, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamitie shall cause
To Humane life, and houshold peace confound.

The editors remark upon this passage only that it is Milton's recollection of his own unhappy experience with Mary Powell or his interest in a Miss Davis. In view of Adam's inexperience, one may suppose that this has seemed the best

explanation for the presence of the lines. Dramatically considered, however, the lines make good sense without reference to Mary Powell. Adam's generalizations are ridiculous, and properly so. The effect of such a speech is to suggest both lack of judgment in Adam and his ripeness for persuasion by Eve. He moves from the particular to the general; he is blustering, generalizing from a single example which his own experience will not even support, much less confirm. I do not speak of Milton's intentions in the matter. I speak only of the dramatic figure Adam cuts as he makes these remarks, a ridiculous figure perfectly appropriate to his disorganized and weakened spirit. A comparable effect on the reader occurs earlier when Adam describes himself as more miserable than any example past or future. The reader's awareness of Adam's ignorance of future examples tends to persuade him all the more of Adam's distraught condition.

It is in the next speech that Eve teaches Adam what he could not learn in his soliloquy; for she rouses his pity by offering to take all the punishment on herself. She thus teaches him mercy as a feature of his superiority to her; and his faith in God's mercy wakens from that moment. Before this he has been concerned only with the justification of God and with his own miserable lot. Now his faith grows, and he looks to God for mercy. In this sense Adam is just beginning to believe in a complete God, a God of love and mercy as well as a God of power and justice.

As to the structure of the soliloquy, three themes dominate: Adam, his immortality, and death, death feared and invited, with the latter two moving the first, Adam, toward a climax of despair. The strategy of the passage is dialectic—on the one hand, the sense of emotional

deformity and turmoil, produced in part by the abrupt changes in subject and tone, not to speak of the many contrasts, broken lines, and the high proportion of double caesuras. Contrasting to this feeling of turmoil and chaos is the binding and unifying effect produced by the repetition of ideas, words, and even sounds. The twin themes of immortality and death are reflected constantly in the synonyms and figures throughout. Adam speaks of *lasting woes*, *endless woes*, *living Death*, *wrath without end*, and so on. Similarly, the words *death* or *dies* and *curse* run like dark threads through the fabric of the passage. The three themes—Adam, immortality, and death—unite in a climax in the despairing cry, "both death and I / Am found Eternal." The singular verb expresses Adam's terrified identification of himself with his punishment as a single everlasting entity.

A further unification appears from the presence in the soliloquy, in their usual order, of what the theologians, including Milton, called the "four degrees of death." The first degree is all those evils which lead to death and which came into the world upon the Fall of man, the most important of which are guiltiness and the terrors of conscience. The second degree is spiritual death, which is the obscuring of right reason. The third is the death of the body and soul, the very conclusion which Adam himself reaches. The fourth degree—and this, too, realized within the soliloquy—is death eternal, the punishment of the damned.

It should be remarked here that the mortalist heresy, which is identified with Milton as well as with Adam because of its appearance in *De doctrina Christiana* is, dramatically considered, really one of the evasions that Adam abjures near the end of the soliloquy. Adam tries to comfort himself by saying, "All of me then

shall die," but soon abandons that notion, as he realizes that none of him will ever die.

In addition to the repetition of ideas and words indicated above, there is in the passage a very interesting use of sound. It is full of the harsh sounds which Chard Powers Smith, in analyzing Shakespeare's poetry, has described as those which give strength and fiber to English verse. For a single illustration, the *k*-sounds in such words as *becom*, *accurst*, *request*, *Maker*, *clay*, *concur'd*, *darkness*, *corporeal*, and *clod* contribute, unobtrusively but unmistakably, to the emphasis upon Adam's agony.

The organic relationship of this passage to the rest of the poem can now, I think, be demonstrated structurally as well as psychologically. Thus, when Adam and Eve sinned, the discord moved from them out into the cosmos, producing directly the external effects of the Fall. Just before the soliloquy opens, the movement is comparable but reversed. The movement now is from the circumference to the center. As they are mentioned in this passage, first come the alterations in the stars and planets; then the winds and the change in the skies; then discord in animals is described; and, finally, Adam also in chaos.

these were from without
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within.

The effects of the Fall move back upon him, and that fact is further suggested by what Adam says of his curses:

all from mee
Shall with a fierce reflux on mee redound,
On mee as on thir natural center light
Heavie, though in thir place.

This reversal of movement effects a relation between the organization of the pre-

ceding events and the organization of this passage.

The relation of the soliloquy to the events of the last two books is not structural in this same way, but it is no less organic. The Adam in Books XI and XII acts like the Adam of Book X and does so in part because of what happens in the soliloquy. The one grows out of the other. It is not simply that the instructed Adam moves from the despair of the soliloquy to a realization of his opportunities and responsibilities. All through his soliloquy, as he twists and turns under the lash of his conscience, Adam clutches at evasions or jumps to conclusions, only to correct himself under the prodding of his slowly emerging reason. The process is continued in the visions, which are a kind of education by induction. Michael shows him death and tells him of senility, and Adam says: "Henceforth I flie not Death, nor would prolong / Life much." Michael corrects him: "Nor love thy Life, nor hate." Again, Adam sees the bevy of fair women and thinks Nature fulfilled in their beauty. Michael rebukes him: "Judg not what is best / By pleasure." After the lecture Adam shifts his ground and has to be corrected again. He says: "Still I see the tenor of Mans woe / Holds on the same, from Woman to begin." Michael replies: "From Mans effeminate slackness it be-

gins." One of the effects of the original sin and of the despair into which Adam fell is this impulsiveness, this impaired judgment. It is not merely that these corrections by Michael provide some suggestion of dramatic conflict in what would otherwise be, as far as Michael and Adam are concerned, straight exposition. They are also, and more importantly, the appropriate psychological effect of Adam's experience in the soliloquy, and they tie that section to the experience of Books XI and XII.

The device of the debate within the soliloquy is paralleled by the debate within the dialogue. The one is not only related to the other but arises out of it as a feature of Adam's character. The relationship strengthens the sense of structural unity and necessity in the poem as a whole and, in this effect, justifies, dramatically at least, the last two books. The practice is continued to the very end of the poem, with Michael's final modification. After Adam exclaims in satisfaction that he has learned his lesson, Michael commends him but again qualifies his enthusiasm:

onely add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add Vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charitie, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier farr.

The Predicament of Modern Poetry

HENRY W. WELLS¹

IT is generally acknowledged that the poetical branch of literature finds itself today in an unusual and somewhat uncomfortable position. The warmest enthusiasts for modern poetry perforce admit that it is not serving the functions which might legitimately be desired. The audience for verse, though possibly fit, is rather painfully limited to the few. Volumes of poetry enjoy at best a very moderate circulation, while the radio has not as yet provided an impressive medium, and the stage very generally prefers prose. Moreover, even if one assumes that the function of poetry is no longer to be read or heard but the purely therapeutic function of being written, too few persons actually compose it, even on a thoroughly amateur basis. It has become one of the stepchildren in the family of the arts. The poet's position in society may not be quite so desperate as the sculptor's, but it is, to repeat, none too comfortable. This condition is certainly not owing to an inadequate quantity of theoretical criticism, for of this an abundance has at least been written, if not read. Yet this criticism frequently circumvents the main and most serious issues arising from the special conditions of our times. This brief article presents one more analysis, aimed at the principal points at issue as these appear to the present writer.

The main conclusions are that, in ways not commonly understood, modern poetry suffers, first of all, from an intense egocentricity and, secondarily, from

a disproportionate preoccupation with technique. This does not mean that there is any real doubt as to the importance of self-expression in the arts or of the need for continuous application to technical problems. But, properly to perform their function, poets, like other artists, should achieve a keen understanding of their potential public and of their neighbors both individually and collectively. Neither their thirst for self-expression nor their quest, under the influence of scientific thought, for technical solutions should deter them from a humaneness which modern verse so generally lacks. These may appear very obvious conclusions, but they are almost as often neglected in theory as they are disregarded in practice.

Critical writing in the twentieth century affords so pertinent a commentary on the poetry itself that it encourages an indirect approach through the work of the critics and theorists. It is a legitimate short-cut or convenience; criticism, being already analysis, meets our questions halfway.

To an extraordinary degree modern poets are the best and most diligent critics in the field. Among the most trenchant essays to appear in English on the form and function of poetry are those by T. S. Eliot, A. E. Housman, Stephen Spender, W. B. Yeats, Edith Sitwell, Day Lewis, Robert Graves, Conrad Aiken, Wallace Stevens, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Ezra Pound. Perhaps the most influential of modern poets, T. S. Eliot is as clearly a leader in

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criticism as in creative writing. Much the same conditions have appeared in France, Germany, and Italy; the poets themselves, like Rilke and Valéry, have been fascinated by aesthetic theory as applied to their art. The pronounced development along these lines has been due equally to the self-consciousness fostered by the climate of the times and to the passion for an increasingly precise or semiscientific analysis which is also encouraged by the spirit of the age. So specialized a language is modern poetry that its practitioners themselves have largely usurped the place of the critics. For one professional critic, such as I. A. Richards, there is a score of poet-critics, such as Ezra Pound.

Although much of this criticism deals most specifically with language and poetics, it is notable that a considerable part of it also glances at the social conditions of our times and the civilization in which we live. The poets are, as a rule, very severe critics of this society. The proportion between social and technical criticism much resembles that between a socially conscious and a primarily personal subject matter in the verse itself. In short, the proportion is fairly even in each case. Yet so violently antagonistic is the view of modern society commonly found among our poets, both as artists and as commentators, that all pretense of sympathy or impartiality is lost and, where the subject matter of the poem is social, the spirit or principal meaning remains of a strongly egocentric character.

By his condemnation of existing society the poet as critic follows a familiar pattern as old as the prophetic books of the Bible, and older still. Yet under present circumstances and with careful reading, it becomes difficult for the impartial observer to free his mind from the thought that the poet condemns a society

that has already rejected him. Whether the modern poet is a belated primitive whom the mechanistic world repudiates or whatever may be the cause, it is certain that for a century and a half the poets as a class have been much more often at war than at peace with society. George Crabbe is one of the last important English poets who managed to live passably in the modern city and to find it a home, even while severely criticizing its faults. Since the rise of romanticism, on the one hand, and industrialism, on the other, the poet has commonly conceived of himself as an exile in the midst of the multitude, loneliest when living in the modern megalopolis. Wordsworth projects this position in the passage in *The Prelude* dealing with London. Baudelaire carries Wordsworth's complaint vastly further. The shining particles of *The Waste Land* are also gleaming bits of London dust which T. S. Eliot, with magnificent affectation, shakes from the soles of his egotistical boots. This is the most characteristic attitude of the recent poet, just as pirouetting upon a Greek headland, as Max Beerbohm reminds us, was the typical pose of the Byronic period.

This spectacle of the poet in angry and perplexed exile is a familiar theme not only among the great, acclaimed at least by the cult of their followers, but among the lowly. The typical poet, whether known or unknown, joins D. H. Lawrence in scorn for "the filthy bourgeoisie." The present writer, for example, is in receipt of a recent letter from a talented young poet wholly uncontaminated by publicity, writing from a New England city of approximately a hundred thousand, where the writer sadly complains that no one in the city understands what he as a poet is attempting. Although my correspondent does not know

them, there are probably at least fifty or a hundred of his fellow-citizens nursing the same grievance. And the same condition holds true in any considerable city in the Western world. Under such unhappy circumstances the poet's complaint is easily explained, though by no means easily removed. The poet fears that to write popularly means the debasement of his art to the level of a dull, unimaginative mob; the crowd meanwhile starves, or at most exists, upon an allegedly depraved pseudo-art of movies, soap-operas, mechanical tunes, and vulgar rhymes.

In their criticism of society, whether in verse or in prose, the poets have of late followed three major courses, in all cases evading a frank and intimate view of mankind as existing today. There are the reactionaries, who turn to the past; the radicals, who turn to a hypothetical future; and the liberals, generally so bent on whitewashing the existing society that they overlook much the larger part of it. All three views are, as a rule, less intimate than doctrinaire. The reactionaries and the radicals, or, as often happens in America, the neo-Fascists and the ex-Communists, constitute by far the larger parties, while, in this sense of the word at least, the liberals have dwindled into minor significance. And it is a piquant irony that reactionaries and radicals appear in exquisite agreement at least in so far as they condemn the alleged errors of our modern era. Thus T. S. Eliot's latest poems, vehicles for a most reactionary philosophy, were first published in America in a review founded under Marxist auspices, while no Communist could possibly say harsher things about capitalistic society than has such an apologist for the old southern tradition as Mr. Allen Tate. Our world would indeed be a gigan-

tic jest were it not a still more colossal tragedy.

Mr. Tate, no less representative in his thinking than inspired in his verse, affords as convenient a clue as any poet or critic to the precise character of the obsessive egocentricity of the modern poet. Such a poet may virtually be defined as one who, delicate in sensibility, has grown about him a protective shell affording at least a partial insulation from the arrows of outrageous fortune. The poem is the shell, lovely and rather cold. (This largely accounts for the still more exquisite poems which Miss Marianne Moore in her profound stoicism has written on skunks, shellfish, elephants, the rhinoceros, beetles, and a vast number of the better insulated of God's creatures.) The poet has, then, become spokesman for an exaggerated subjectivity. Even when he chooses a social subject matter, he is, as a rule, masking the most violent of his personal reactions. This clearly appears in the explanatory comments of Allen Tate upon his masterpiece, "Ode to the Confederate Dead," widely and rightly recognized as one of the best poems recently written in America.

Mr. Tate's explanatory remarks occupy a chapter of a score of pages in his volume, *Reason in Madness*. The essay is sufficiently described by its revealing title, "Narcissus as Narcissus." According to his exposition of the case, the modern poet, perforce an exile from society by reason of his refined sensibilities and the unrefined world, has little to contemplate save himself and, no doubt, his fellow-poets. His ode, he declares, is not really about the Confederates, dead or alive. Tate as a poet is here not really a southerner or writing about southerners. He is actually quite what he indicates himself to be, a typical modern poet and aesthete, characterized, above all, by a

self-acknowledged and an almost boastful, if not positively snobbish, egocentricity.

The attitude of contempt and impatient scorn with which a very large proportion of our poets have viewed modern civilization may, indeed, constitute them a valiant faction devoted to ultimate truth, serving the cause of evolution, and, like a formidable pick, prying loose the dead rot from a diseased culture; but their exaggeratedly satirical position has tended to desiccate and disperse even the finest properties of their art. In other words, they may lay better claim to martyrdom in behalf of social idealism than to effectual service in the cause of art itself. This is not to assume a doctrine of art for art's sake; it is, on the contrary, to presume that art in the normal society is widely distributed and founded on some sympathetic and warm understanding of the individuals constituting society. Such is, on the whole, not the case with the most widely recognized poetry written today, a fair proportion of which merely scolds society, while the remainder plunges into the obscure shadows, into the profound abyss, of purely personal and fundamentally incommunicable experience.

The powerful drift toward specialization seen so conspicuously in all departments of modern life has invaded poetry to its own serious loss. Poetry has presumably drifted further from prose than its own best interests admit. Furthermore, in keeping with the scientific temper of the age, poets have to an exaggerated degree become absorbed in the technical problems of their craft, making of it a unique puzzle rather than a genuine expression of or to either the public or the private man. There can, of course, be no question as to the poet's need to master his technique, but neither is there any

serious question of the undesirability of the technique's mastering him.

These developments become all the more confusing inasmuch as science and its seeming antagonist, romanticism, have, so far as poetry is concerned, operated to much the same ends. By a sad irony those poets and poet-critics declaiming most loudly against the Romantic movement, especially those of the cult of T. S. Eliot, have by virtue of their extraordinary addiction to egocentricity inherited the most dubious qualities of that movement. It seems as though Mr. Eliot's denunciations of the Romantics were motivated by a desire to throw the reader off the scent of his own profound romanticism, just as his denial of the importance of poetry as personal expression appears a feint to conceal his own overwhelming egoism as an artist.

Only with a more broadly based and more genuine humanity can the poet in the immediate future achieve any marked progress in his craft. The very real difficulties of reconciling a distinguished art with a large audience, either bourgeois or proletarian, either in America or in Russia, may be great, but they must and will be faced. Poetry, no less than radio and the theater, requires a broad audience to flourish adequately. Ceasing to mutter biliously to himself within his beard, to exploit a feminine mystification, or to communicate merely with a chain of academic seminars, the poet of the next period will most certainly return to a saner conception of the true functions of the poetic art. This does not mean a radical change in the bearing of his subject matter on the public, social, or political life, on the one hand, or the private life, on the other. The less these distinctions appear imperative, undoubtedly the better. The chief change indicated by current excesses lies in the need

for the poet to modify his egocentricity and to write increasingly of and for mankind. A classical style or, in other words, a style sufficiently powerful to delight readers in many periods is not, as a rule, achieved, as Emily Dickinson achieved hers, by avoiding contemporary allusion but, as Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Molière, and Dryden witness, by utilizing such allusion. Writing from the heart of an Ireland unswayed by industrial civilization, Yeats, the ablest poet of the times, as Eliot is the most fashionable, gave us the best verse that our age has produced where this verse shuns the fashions and remains wholly retrospective in style as well as in ideas. But the

modern consciousness calls for its own uncompromising expression. Poetry is still potentially what it has been since the dawn of man's social living, a major medium for his vision and his life of the spirit. Its sun, though in sensational eclipse, will undoubtedly again shine to the solace and pleasure of mankind. The desired goal can presumably be achieved only by an upheaval in the world of literature and society little short of a spiritual revolution. Although no easy formula is available for critic or for poet, certain of the primary conditions for progress out of our grave predicament and impasse are by no means obscure and have, I trust, been indicated in this article.

How Shall the Undergraduate Read Chaucer? Some Suggestions

H. M. SMYSER¹

THE text of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* has come down to us in what is, to all intents and purposes, its original, pure, and correct form. Unlike the text of the Old Testament or, for that matter, of *Hamlet* or *Lear*, it is free from any considerable obscurities of the sort which arise when an early manuscript is damaged or when an early copyist or printer makes stupid or careless changes. Furthermore, as it happens, Chaucer never deals in prophecy, riddles, or charms or in any other literary genre in which writers are sometimes wilfully obscure. His departures from correct and easily understandable syntax—as in *General Prologue*, lines 172–76—are so rare and so very obvious as to cause no trouble, especially since each is explained in the

notes in any edition likely to be used in the classroom. From these facts it follows, I believe, that the teacher of Chaucer is justified in urging upon the student, as a working principle always to be held in the front of the mind, the assumption that in Chaucer *every single line makes good sense*, and sense which can be rendered accurately in Modern English.

Unless my observations and inferences have been incorrect, this principle is not always impressed upon undergraduate readers of Chaucer and is especially likely to be neglected in the brief readings done in survey or "great-masters" courses, where time is at a premium. Here, particularly, the instructor is tempted to enter into a tacit gentlemen's agreement that the student will get

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what he can out of Chaucer, without being held responsible either in quizzes or in final examinations for literal and exact paraphrases of the text. The result is that the student "reads to get the general idea" or "reads to get the story."

Unfortunately, neither the "general idea" nor the "story" is great literature—neither, in fact, is usually Chaucer's, since he appropriated both ideas and plots. As a poet, Chaucer is comparable to Flemish painters: his genius manifests itself in the ability to record the precise detail, to draw the fine line, that gives life and depth. To read him for "the general idea" or for "the story" is like preferring indistinct black-and-white photographs of Breughel's paintings to the originals.

To know what Chaucer is talking about and yet to miss the color, the real poetry, is easy. For example, perhaps the most somberly beautiful scene in *The Canterbury Tales* is that in which Death appears to the three revelers in the "Pardoner's Tale" in the figure of an old man who cannot die but who forever wanders about, knocking with his staff upon the ground and begging Mother Earth to take him in:

Thus walke I, lyk a resteles kaityf,
And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, "Leeve mooder, leet me in!"

[*Works*, ed. F. N. Robinson, CT, VI, 728-31.]

Since modern readers are familiar with the word "caitiff" in the meaning of "base, despicable person," it is all too easy to suppose that Chaucer has stooped here to a flabby simile in the midst of an otherwise magnificent passage—that he describes the old man as walking about "like a restless, base person." Actually, in Chaucer's time, "kaityf" still had also its original meaning of "captive," "prisoner" (Latin *captivus*), and the simile—

"Thus walk I like a restless prisoner"—has an almost painful sharpness and the true appropriateness which we expect of figures in all great poetry.

Words which have disappeared from the language since Chaucer's time and are therefore wholly unfamiliar are, at first, a nuisance; of that there can be no doubt. In my experience, however, it is a rapidly diminishing nuisance, especially where the student makes use of "flash cards," writing the Chaucerian word on one side and the modern English equivalent on the other. By the end of two or three assignments the difficulty of reading has abated markedly, and in its place has come a genuine satisfaction at being able to cope with a text that at first glance had seemed impossible. In any case, "leeve" ("dear"), "theen, theeche" ("to thrive," "I thrive"), "meten" ("to dream"), "sweven" ("a dream"), "stevene" ("a voice"), "swynken" ("to labor"), "unnethes" ("scarcely"), "wood" ("insane"), and other such wholly unfamiliar words cause no lasting difficulty; the student looks them up automatically. It is such words as "kaityf," which survive in identical or at least easily recognizable form but which have undergone a change in meaning (semantic change), that present a serious and continuing problem to the student.

Among the thousands of words in Chaucer which retain the same form in our own Modern English, how is the student to detect that sizable minority which do not mean in our usage what they meant in Chaucer's? Here, I think, we must repeatedly bring the student back to our first assumption, that every single line makes clear sense. He must be reminded constantly that any foggiess or inconsistency or flatness in the text is to be attributed to a semantic change which he has failed to recognize. Why

should the Clerk's discourse be "ful of hy sentence" with "sentence" in the singular? Why should the Pardoner begin his denunciation of gambling with the words "Now wol I yow *deffenden* hasardrye"? Why should the Monk—a stylish, affluent man of the world—fasten his hood with anything so seemingly Bohemian as "a ful *curious* pyn"? Why should Arcite, in the "Knight's Tale," say that he is likely to "sterve" in despair and distress when he is actually in the midst of plenty? The student must become constantly suspicious of expressions like these. Occasionally, a knowledge of modern French or German may enable him to infer Chaucer's meaning safely—he may recall, for example, that modern French *défendre* sometimes still means "to forbid," as in the expression *Défense de fumer* ("Smoking forbidden"), and that German *sterben* still means "to die" (in any fashion and not simply through lack of food). But usually, of course, he will be forced to turn to his Chaucer glossary or to the Oxford *New English Dictionary*. Then and then only will it transpire that the "sentence" of the Clerk's discourse was "elevated sentiment" and that the Monk's "curious pyn" was a pin made with care (Latin *cura*)—that is, skilfully, elaborately, beautifully wrought and in every way suitable to its wearer.

Against the difficulty and inconvenience of reading Chaucer closely in undergraduate courses is to be weighed, it seems to me, the value of a most important by-product. Just as Chaucer has been a great master to many later English poets, so he can be a great master to readers of English poetry, not only in an aesthetic sense but in the pedagogical sense that is our concern here. Since he is the earliest of the major English poets—by two centuries and by a whole epoch

in the history of our tongue—his language, as such, offers the greatest challenge to complete understanding. The student who reads Chaucer closely develops a sensitivity to the presence of semantic differences in formally similar or identical medieval-and-modern English words, much as one who habitually climbs difficult peaks develops extraordinary sure-footedness. Unfortunately for our understanding of later poetry, semantic change did not end at Chaucer's death; it has never ended and will never end so long as language is spoken. As every teacher knows only too well, great numbers of semantic changes ever threaten to impede the student's understanding of Shakespeare, Milton, and Herbert, for example—indeed, are sure to impede it unless we have made him especially wary, especially ready to be suspicious of any word that is seemingly in the least inept. Even a contemporary poet may use a word in a traditional, perhaps slightly archaic, sense that may be all too easily overlooked in favor of a meaning more current and colloquial. Thus undergraduates have been known to misread a passage in T. S. Eliot's moving "Journey of the Magi," where the speaker is describing the hardships suffered in the quest:

There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

To take "regretted" in its commonest current sense, that is, to look upon the Magi as suffering remorse for past indulgences, which have presumably made them less fit for their present task, is surely to distort Eliot's meaning sadly and to give the poem an evangelical cast which it is not meant to have. The clue to semantic error here is to be found in the mood of the Magi, which is one of

doubt and near-despair; there are times when they regret, that is, remember wistfully and longingly, the luxuries of former days.

Developing a sensitivity to possible semantic differences between Chaucer's words and his own is, I would thus suggest, the chief means whereby the student may remove the obstacles—so far as these are linguistic—between Chaucer and himself and, indeed, between all other poets and himself.

As regards Chaucer's language, there remain, of course, other difficulties on the more mechanical, syntactic side. It is manifestly impossible to make anything like a formal study of Middle English grammar even in a full Chaucer course, to say nothing of the survey or "great-masters" courses. The problem is one of selection. Pragmatically, I have compiled the following five paragraphs as being calculated to remove the most common and troublesome stumbling blocks from the student's path. I offer them to other teachers of Chaucer for what they may be worth. (The quotations are from the Robinson edition, of the *Canterbury Tales*, cited earlier.)

1. The order of elements in a sentence was less rigidly prescribed in Chaucer's time than in our own. This is likely to be at least momentarily puzzling, especially when an adverbial preposition appears "out of order" (as we see it). Thus:

I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron *with* my predicacioun.
(To spice my preaching *with*.)

[VI, 344 f.]

An heyre clowt to wrappe *in* me.
(A hair cloth to wrap me *in*.)

[VI, 736]

God save yow, that boghte *agayn* mankynde.
(God, who bought mankind *again* [redeemed mankind] save you.)

[VI, 766]

2. Common prepositions sometimes have a different meaning from that expected. It is well to take careful note of these as they appear.

Namoore, *up* payne of lesynge of youre heed!
(No more, *upon* pain of losing your head!)

[I, 1707]

Somwhat he lipped, *for* his wantownesse,
To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge.
(Somewhat he lisped, *on account of* his wantonness. . .)

[I, 264 f.]

That frothen whit as foom *for* ire wood.
(That froth as white as foam, insane *with*, *because of*, wrath.)

[I, 1659]

Or elles I am but lost, *but if that* I
Be lik a wilde leoun, fool-hardy.
(Or else I am lost, *unless* I . . .)

[VII, 1915 f.]

3. The dative-accusative of pronouns is often found in use as a dative, especially in impersonal constructions without subject. (The dative has the sense of "to" or "for.")

Now is me shape eternally to dwelle. . .
(Now is [it] "shaped" [destined] *for* me eternally to dwell. . .)

[I, 1225]

Seillynge hir cours, where as hem liste go.
(Sailing their course, where [it] pleased [was pleasing *to*] them to go.)

[V, 851]

(Incidentally, the student may remember that the Chaucerian "hem" is plural by relating it—correctly—to our colloquial "'em.")

Wel hath Fortune yturned thee the dys.
(Well hath Fortune turned the dice *for* thee.)

[I, 1238]

4. Some passages, otherwise perplexing, will become clear if the student will "pronounce" the words mentally (or still better, orally) and will endeavor to ignore modern spelling conventions.

Wolde han maked any herte lighte
That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse,
Or to greet sorwe, helde it in distresse.
(Would have made any heart light
That ever was born, unless *too* great sickness,
Or *too* great sorrow, held it in distress.)

[V, 914-916]

To his felawes in he took the way.
(To his companion's *inn* he took his way.)

[VII, 3026]

5. Various other obsolete constructions and acceptations will, like those named above, soon become familiar to the reader of Chaucer and will lose any obscurity

or even strangeness that they may have had at first. Among these may be mentioned: (a) the, to us, superfluous use of *that* in combination with another conjunction ("Whan *that* Aprille with his shoures soote" [I, 1]); (b) conversely, the use of *that* to mean *that which*, *so that*, and the like ("Thou hast nat doon *that* I comanded thee" [III, 2041; cf. VII, 2858]); (c) the (very common) use of *ther* to mean *where* ("Lo Grenewych, *ther* many a shrewe is inne!" [I, 3907]); and (d) the use of such contracted verb forms as *rit* for *rideth* and *fint* for *findeth*.

A Modest Proposal

WILLIS D. JACOBS¹

THE department of English at any university is a battleground. For some years two major wars have been waged within such departments. Like natives of a ceaselessly warring tribe, English faculty members soon grow accustomed to such a condition. They forget the customs of peace and begin to feel that only such a siege of warfare—suppressed at this moment, volcanic at that moment—is usual and even proper. Around the edges of the two present conflicts, moreover, new skirmishes and sudden forays are boiling up. These new areas of strife are portentous in their effects. Here is a phenomenon which requires us to think through the whole philosophy of departments of English. First, though, let us briefly recall the two traditional areas of conflict.

Of these two, one is ancestral—a kind of tribal war. It is the old battle between

literature and language, between aesthetics and philology. Whether English should be considered and taught essentially as an aesthetic art or as a philological science apparently is debatable and, it seems, unresolvable. Weariness has induced a fretful pact between these two views, though that pact periodically flares into petty war. At some schools an uneasy compromise has granted aesthetics the undergraduate courses in literature and philology the graduate courses. Each side, however, raids into the territory of the other, and the compromise is marred by flashes of temper, internal adjustments, swift seizures of power. By and large, today linguistics is on the defensive, aesthetics boldly offensive. The situation, though, is restless; the conflict may sleep for days and years, but it is not dead.

More recent and far more momentous is the second civil war within English departments. This is the relatively new and increasingly serious battle between

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"British" literature and "American" literature. It is violent enough to force in time a complete schism—an India and a Pakistan. Unless a richer and truer philosophy is adopted, indeed, an absolute cleavage seems inevitable within a generation. At some colleges it already exists. The cry of the nationalist is heard in the land. Such a cry cannot be shrugged off, for nationalism in literature is surely the curse of this century as much as is nationalism in politics. There is no stronger force today and no more dangerous one.

Certainly, it must be admitted that a nationalistic rift is growing with alarming speed within English departments. Normally the chairman is a man trained in British literature. If so, those of the staff who are skilled in American studies feel repressed and injured; jealously they count the number of offerings in American literature and compare that number with the courses in British literature. Along with many voices outside the university, these men demand at least equal representation with British literature. We are Americans, they say; our students are Americans; we want them to understand their national life, and the best approach is through our national literature—the human being is lost in the American. So eloquent are these arguments that at almost every university today courses in American literature are multiplying and, even so, many chairmen suffer pangs for fear that not enough American literature is being presented within their department.

If the chairman is a man trained in American literature, those of the staff who specialized in British culture are worried. They see their subject challenged by steadily enlarged offerings in American literature. They fear that in time they will be but an appendage within a department whose chief emphasis is

upon "American literature for American students." They argue that the masters of thought and language should be studied in preference to the second-rate and that therefore, for generations to come, stress must be placed upon the great spirits of British literature.

As the chasm grows within established departments, here and there a voice demands that even the name of the department of English be changed. Call it the "department of British and American literature," it is urged. Thence to another step is really very easy, especially since it appears to have logic on its side: Have two departments, one a department of British literature, the other a department of American literature. The schism is complete.

This second battleground is already vicious. Some chairmen have capitulated to the demands of American literature; many are well on the way to at least a mathematical equalization of British and American offerings; most are nervous under the attacks and counterattacks from both sides. Only a few chairmen and instructors alike, it appears, understand that the trouble arises from a deep error, sanctified by the present organization of the department of English. To divide the department is but to intensify the error.

At this very moment, as an ineluctable growth from the prevailing nationalistic concept of literature, within departments new disruptions are appearing. Most prominent of them is the assertion of what is termed "regional literature." Thus universities in the East, South, Midwest, and West are actively promoting courses in the literature of their geographical area, each assuming that its section of the nation has given birth to a notable literature, deserving of special study and emphasis. This Balkanization of literature is spreading without

halt. Scandinavian-American literature, southwestern literature, southern literature, frontier literature—such are some of the class courses proliferating within the United States. Nor can such courses be criticized in themselves. They are as justified as is a course in “American literature” or “British literature.” After all, not only are we Americans of Anglo-Saxon culture, we are also natives of our region. To understand the life and thought of our area, should we not study the literature of that area?

It is nationalism in literature. And one nationalism is no worse than another. Once grant that literature should be, must be, taught as a national property, and “regional literature” follows with iron logicity. So it is that new dissensions boil within departments of English or within departments of American literature—the often silent, always restive, fight between the larger and the smaller interests.

Yet there is a fundamental sickness to it all. Surely, it is certain that to teach literature by nationalities or by regions within nationalities is not only philosophically and artistically fallacious but also stultifying and diseased. By sheer inertia colleges continue to sequester literature and herd it within national boundaries. As a consequence, faculties of English departments have taught many a second-rate figure to their students because that figure is English or American, while ignoring the first-rate and world-important because that figure is French, Italian, Russian, or whatnot. Equally guilty are the departments of modern languages. Students graduate from our universities with a speaking knowledge of many second-rate figures in British literature and third-rate figures in American literature and never have read a novel by Tolstoy, a canto by Dante, a

play by Sophocles. That is to say, they have never read the first-rate persons of other areas. It is difficult to see how English faculty members can be proud of a student who passes a course in the novel and yet has never read a work by Tolstoy and Dostoevski of Russia, by Balzac and Zola of France, by Mann of Germany—each of whom has written better books than many of those required in the present courses in the novel. It is difficult to see how English faculty members can justify the student who has finished a course in the drama, has read Marston and Massinger, but has never read Aeschylus, Calderón, and Ibsen.

It is time, in short, to insist that our students know the first-rate first, regardless of imaginary boundary lines; to assert that not even a dozen of the second- and third-rate of one's nation equal a great writer of whatever nation; to declare no man well read because he knows the trivialities within his nation if he remains ignorant of the great works of many nations. It is time, that is, to free ourselves and our students from the stultifications of nationalistic literature. The road of nationalistic literature leads to the apotheosis of the parochial and the provincial. By the exigencies of class time, nationalistic literature deals with the worth while and the not worth while alike devolving from a given geographical zone, while at the same time it precludes study of the worth while wherever it is found. Surely, this is the academic sin against the Holy Ghost; this is the face of evil itself.

What is really needed is an end to departments of English literature, departments of American literature, departments of French literature, and so on. What is needed is a department of literature. In such an all-university department of literature, students would learn

the works and ideas of the significant and delightful persons of all literature. Yet a department of literature entails certain difficulties. Given the departmentalization now common to universities, a consolidation of all literature courses into a single department of literature is remote. Somehow the change would seem a sacrifice to some people rather than the rich advantage that it is. For a time, then, the ecumenical department of literature is the grail which beckons us on. There is, moreover, a graver matter. Even with a department of literature, a free and enlarged teaching of literature would be impossible without a basic change in the nature of the courses offered.

A workable solution lies within the grasp of present departments of English. The solution is particularly desirable because it solves several stresses at once. It should dissolve the internecine conflict between British and American literature and between American and regional literature at the same time that it would direct students to a real and true literary knowledge and to a comprehensive, rather than a vacuously narrow, education. This solution looks forward to the abolition of the present nationalistic courses in departments of English and the substitution therefor of international courses. It looks upon the student not merely as an American or a product of Anglo-Saxon history but as a human being among men. It judges that a student will best profit by the study of the first-rate productions of the human mind in whatever era and whatever language they are written.

Under this proposal the department of English would substitute, for its present regimen, courses in lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, the novel, the epic, utopias in literature, and whatever other segments of literary endeavor the department con-

siders viable and valuable. These group courses would extend horizontally and vertically; each course would incorporate the best work in that art form regardless of national origin. In the course in the lyric, the program could well begin with Sappho and Anacreon, then move by stages to Horace and Catullus, Hafiz and Omar, Petrarch and Villon, and would, indeed, include the master-lyrists of British and American poetry as well as those of France, Germany, and other nations. It would assure that the students knew the best lyrics of Heine translated into English as well as the best lyrics of T. S. Eliot written in English. It would be a course in lyric poetry—not in British or American lyrics alone, while neglecting their peers of other nations. From this approach the student gains vast understandings and illuminations otherwise invisible to him. Reading Herrick after having read Anacreon and Catullus; reading Pope after having read Horace; reading Frost after having read the eclogues of Bion and Milton, the student experiences the joy of recognition and the joy of enrichment. Such a course is more than an eye-opener. It is an experience in the process of art and the mind of man beyond treasure. Those instructors who love their own English literature with the dearest passion will themselves experience the happiness of seeing their students more fully and more richly react to those English works.

With all the proposed courses a similar procedure should be followed. In the epic, thus, the student would read Homer and Virgil and Dante, and then *Paradise Lost* would reveal a more significant and truer Milton to him; he would read the *Kalevala*, *The Song of Roland*, and *The Cid*, and then *Beowulf* would fall into proper and meaningful perspective. Indeed, how can a student, with the best

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will in the world, truly understand the method and form of Milton's epic if he is ignorant of Virgil's and Dante's? The world expands, men and nations take their place in the great human drama, and the student rises touched with the wonder of man's large hopes and continued endeavors.

The class in tragedy might well start with Aeschylus, would include in due time Marlowe and Shakespeare and O'Neill but, as well, would include Heibel and Ibsen. Leaving such a class properly taught, students would know tragedy as a form, as a philosophy, and as an achievement and not simply certain national samples of the art. Once again the question intrudes: How can we justify teaching a student Thomas Otway and not Chekhov, John Webster and not Jean Racine?

In the class in the novel splendid things can be broached. The great novels of the world can be introduced. Certainly, the class would read Fielding and Dickens of England, Hawthorne and Melville of America, but as certainly it should know the great Russian and French accomplishments, which, after all, are more meaningful and fecund than many novels customarily assigned in present courses in the English novel. To know Richardson and not Stendhal, Smollett and not Cervantes, is to be a crippled man. It is equivalent to the foot-binding of the Chinese.

Nor should this program be esteemed a course in "types." To learn the first-rate writing of the world by means of courses in the epic, the comedy, the novel, and so on, is a convenient method, not a brass frame. The plan is designed to break the fierce mold of nationalistic teaching, which sacrifices the best work of the entire world for the best and the third-rate alike of its language, even if such work is

only second- or fifth-rate in comparison with the strongest productions of all people. Fertile ideas, significant techniques, soul-examining problems, rich values, appear in all literatures, and this approach means that the student and teacher engage them through the best samples of man's art and thought. Through this method our students can win real knowledge—in fact, for the first time genuine understanding—of their own literature. At the same time they will have at least some knowledge of the best which has been achieved by men throughout the years. Life itself takes on range.

To supplement these group course offerings, English departments may desire to offer certain classes in the supreme artists of their own culture: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Emerson, Browning, and a few others. Combined, these two plans—the group courses and the person courses—would work to dissipate both the appalling ignorance of English majors and the intestinal attrition within English departments.

To the proposal of these group courses two objections come forward. One is practical. Few satisfactory textbooks now exist for use in such courses as the lyric and the epic in world literature. But if such programs are instituted, textbooks will spring up under that bright sun; with satisfactory textbooks will diminish the complaints of the few traditionalists who grump that literature must never be read in translation—even if that hidebound insistence were to keep the world blind. The second objection would arise from instructors who feel themselves incompetent to direct these courses in the master-works of all lands, though competent to teach the first, second-, and third-rate of one land. But competence can come too, especially as

instructors themselves are stirred by the masterpieces and as they further see the startling illuminations that invest the literature which they already know through the medium of the literature that they now are learning. Robert Herrick by himself is pleasant; Robert Herrick read after the Greek and Latin lyricists is twice a man and poet. Swinburne by himself is curious; Swinburne read after the French poets of his century takes on a meaningful pattern.

It would be well, too, to recognize certain general difficulties. Let us, however, not be fearful of them. Our colleges are swathed with limitations exuding from their present organization into departments. Thus in some universities to sanction, within a regenerated English department, courses in general literature would step on goutish toes—perhaps even stamp on them. The assumption often is that departments are ferociously jealous. It would seem like poaching upon posted demesnes. Other departments might take pain or fright. Only a real love of learning and a generous faith in principled education would still such anguish. Such love and faith exist in large measure among teachers of all departments. Moreover, rare is the department, whether French, German, Latin, or whatsoever language, which already offers in English translation such a program as is here envisioned. The proposal is far more like seduction than rape.

Existent departments, too, it must be conceded, often look askance upon plans to inaugurate a department of comparative literature; they thus might look askance upon an independent department of literature (without the "comparative," which word is intolerable on two grounds:

it connotes a nationalistic approach once more, and it suggests the philological stress in literature). Here again fright is unnecessary and incongruous; for surely, whenever a department of English emerges from its narrows to become the more spacious department of literature, it will desire and seek the aid of all departments of literary interest in the formulation and organization of its new, enlightened curriculum. The revised department will be a co-operative, as well as an emancipating, venture. It should be welcomed by all departments engaged in teaching the humanities.

Indeed, from such departments must come advice, encouragement, support. It may be that from them will come the loan or transfer of individual instructors. A committee representing the departments directly concerned with humane studies might well exercise benevolent supervision of the new program until it proved its value. But such supervision, such indirect control, ought to wither fast. As one counts up the objections and difficulties to this new department of literature, they seem more bugaboos than realities. They are the Boag of Peer Gynt, and he easily made his way around it. Such a way must be sought.

This proposal for group courses in the master-works of all literatures, to replace the parochial and nationalistic courses of one literature, will educate both student and instructor. It will add meaning, range, and depth to the literature of one's native tongue. It will vitiate the nationalism which is as stultifying in literature as it is in politics. It will open high new areas of thought and delight. The plan will ennoble him who teaches and him who learns. It is a valiant and valuable approach to maturity.

Linguistics and Pedagogy: The Need for Conciliation

THOMAS PYLES¹

IT IS obvious to the objective student of language that the English language taught in the classroom is frequently not the same as that observed in the writings of the masters of English prose and poetry and in the speech of well-bred, cultivated people. This dichotomy disturbs me; for, as a professor of English, I foresee that it is going to make the strange race of pedagogues, to which unkind genes have doomed me, look pretty foolish one of these days—even more foolish than our paltry compensation already makes us look to successful men who build bridges and fill teeth—when a sufficiently large number of our students detect the essential fraudulence of our position as grammatical dictators. So esoteric have we made our cult that as yet our pronouncements on English usage are regarded as coming straight from a linguistic Mount Horeb; but a day of reckoning may come—my worst nightmare may become a horrible reality: a generation of students may yet rise against us and ask, “How do you *know* what good English is, if it isn’t the English written in the very books which you recommended to us?” Well, on second thought, perhaps the possibility is remote, students being what they are.

Nevertheless, too many of us schoolmarms—I use the term bisexually and write as one of the family, free to criticize, albeit lovingly and humbly—would seem to believe in an ideal English lan-

guage, God-given instead of shaped and molded by man, somewhere off in a sort of linguistic stratosphere—a language which nobody actually speaks or writes but toward whose ineffable standards all should aspire. Some of us, however, have in our worst moments suspected that writers of handbooks of so-called “standard English usage” really know no more about what the English language ought to be than those who use it effectively and sometimes beautifully. In truth, I long ago arrived at such a conclusion: frankly, I do not believe that anyone knows what language *ought* to be. What most of the authors of handbooks do know is what they *want* English to be, which does not interest me in the least except as an indication of the love of some professors for absolute and final authority.

When Mr. Churchill said “It’s me” in a public speech, American schoolteachers were much alarmed. It is true that most “authorities” grudgingly “allow” this locution, hallowed by cultivated usage and found in the most reputable English writing and speech for centuries; but they take care to label it “colloquial,” which to all too many of us means “wrong,” a judgment which the grudging tone of the “authorities” does nothing to discourage. A letter-writer to *Time* from Brentwood, Tennessee, remarked: “Apparently we have arrived at a point where it is not necessary for . . . anyone . . . to learn the difference between the

¹ University of Florida.

nominative and accusative cases. . . . Is this perhaps a Churchillian bit of undress in order to gain the approval of the masses?" I might comment that Mr. Churchill was almost certainly not departing from the usage of his by no means proletarian ancestors, the dukes of Marlborough. What is significant is that the writer from Brentwood, Tennessee, knew better what constituted "good" English than one of the most effective living users of our language. In truth, if the point of view of this gentleman from Tennessee, which is altogether too typical of teachers of English, were carried to its logical conclusion, we should be required to speak our language in its oldest and most complicated form. At the time when the dual number was going out of use in English because it was troublesome, complicated, and not at all worth preserving, people like our Tennessean no doubt shook their heads sadly and croaked that the English language was going to the dogs; for, in truth, from this point of view all languages, not English only, have always been going to the dogs. When the Old English nominative and accusative cases were leveled, English was going to the dogs; when natural gender superseded grammatical gender, English was going to the dogs; when the distinction between preterit singular and preterit plural was lost in all verbs except *be* (and the folk have lost it here in "you was," "we was," "they was," simply carrying on a tendency which was arrested by the spread of public education), English was going to the dogs. And when the languages derived from Latin lost case endings in the noun even more completely than did English, those languages had gone to the dogs. In fact, from the point of view of the classicist, Vulgar Latin had itself gone to the dogs. But I refuse to fret. I can get along

very well without the fine distinctions which the classicist takes such pride in, for instance, those expressed by the subjunctive. The fact that the subjunctive is dead in British English and moribund, despite our misguided efforts to pump blood into it, in American English does not distress me in the least. I never liked to bother with the subjunctive anyway, except as a sort of mental exercise like working anagrams or crossword puzzles. And I see no point in teaching its niceties to freshmen, who will never use it outside the classroom except in a few stereotyped constructions, for the proper management of which their own *Sprachgefühl* will be a sufficient guide.

What these linguistic authoritarians really object to is linguistic change—or, rather, any departure from what they happen to approve on grounds of aesthetic taste or classical tradition or simply whim. Now objecting to linguistic change is like objecting to other facts of our existence: it doesn't get one very far along the road to understanding. Many find the physical facts of birth and death repugnant—in certain circles they are never referred to directly ("when Baby came," "when Father passed away," etc.); and, indeed, certain aspects of both, despite romantic sentimentalization designed to make them more bearable to the human consciousness, are shockingly inartistic, to say the least. But there just isn't anything we can do except sentimentalize; and sentimentalism isn't the same thing as facing the facts. It does little good to protest against the law of gravity, however inconvenient it may prove at times; as has been pointed out by an astute commentator on human folly, one doesn't repeal the law by stepping off a cliff, one merely demonstrates it.

Much of our teaching is based on the

assumption that everyone ought to talk and write in exactly the same way—that there is a right way and that all departures from it are therefore wrong. For instance, the handbooks are unanimous in condemning colloquial “he don’t,” “it don’t,” “she don’t.” As a matter of fact, many cultivated speakers of southern American English, landed gentlemen and ladies who would grace even an Iowa drawing-room, do employ this contraction of “does not” instead of the more usual (in educated use) “doesn’t.” (Let it be borne in mind that, when used in the third person singular, “don’t” is certainly no contraction of “do not,” despite the too easy contention of the handbook-makers that it is.) I trust that no reader will so far misunderstand me as to suppose that I am recommending “he don’t” for general American use (as if I could feel qualified to recommend to anyone how he ought to talk); I merely point out that any text that condemns this variant contraction as exclusively uncouth and illiterate is unaware of the facts of language, which I believe even freshmen are mature enough to be taught. There is absolutely no reason for an educated Iowan or Nebraskan to say “he don’t”; only let him not suppose that the locution is invariably to be associated with indifference about washing behind the ears.

Not long ago it was my duty to find a longish paragraph—about 350 words—for analysis in a junior English achievement examination. Now in these sorry days of widespread, but only partial, literacy, paragraphs of such length are hard to come by. So I went to the Victorians, settling upon Cardinal Newman, whose usage in my innocence I thought would come up to our standards. I selected tentatively the famous description

of a gentleman from *The Idea of a University*, which runs as follows:

The true gentleman . . . carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home.

And at this point I had to throw Cardinal Newman out of my office window. He simply did not write well enough to satisfy undergraduate requirements in an American state university; poor gentleman, he was not aware, as are the authors of every little tuppenny-ha’penny handbook of English usage, that *every one* is always singular and should therefore always be referred to by a singular pronoun. Incidentally, in the section of the aforesaid examination dealing with usage, a colleague had contributed a sentence containing the same “error” to be corrected.

Now it so happens that this particular “error” has been made by the most prominent authors since the sixteenth century, not to speak of its decidedly frequent occurrence in cultured speech at the present day. How long, one wonders, does it take for a locution to establish itself as “good”? We could, of course, infer that Jane Austen, De Quincey, Arnold, Newman, and the rest would have written better, or at least more “correctly,” had they “taken” English I or its equivalent in practically any American university; but it would be a pretty silly inference, I think. As a matter of fact, I believe that a statistical study—I have made none—would show that *they*, *their*, and *them* refer to *everyone*, *everybody*, *no one*, and *nobody* in the masterpieces of recent English literature somewhat more frequently than do *he*, *his*, and *him*. The painstaking observer of language habits

can therefore only wonder whence is derived this favorite rule of the handbook-makers. Perhaps, like Swift's spider, they have spun it out of their own entrails, for it certainly is not based on the usage of the "best speakers and writers," who are, incidentally, not invariably teachers of English. He can only believe that the rule-makers have access to sources of information, above and beyond the corpus of English literature, from which he is debarred—a trunk-line to some sort of linguistic Yahweh, maybe.

The honest teacher may well be troubled. He may reach a point where he can no longer condemn a locution simply because some rule-maker, frequently a linguistic illiterate, has blacklisted it. Even if he has no conscience and can therefore be perfectly cynical about the whole business, he still needs to fear for his scholarly reputation every time an observant student shows signs of interest in English literature. Fortunately, students are not as a rule observant of such matters, and they do not read Cardinal Newman any more. Perhaps they are spared "bad grammar" in the literary and elocutionary tinsel of Dr. Lloyd Douglas and Mr. Gabriel Heatter, both of whom have presumably "taken" freshman English. And so the schoolmarm maintains her little sway.

- What is "good English"? The rule-makers say it is one thing, and the most prominent writers and speakers lead one to infer that it is something quite different, not at all bound down by thou-shalt-nots. Read the masters, and you will find that, according to the handbook-makers, they write very bad English indeed; for they are frequently unable to distinguish between *who* and *whom*, and they do not even know that *to be* can never take an object.

I pick up one of these handbooks of

English usage, copyrighted 1943 (if it were 1949 it would make no difference, since each new text, with the exception of one or two not very widely used because teachers do not find them sufficiently "strict," seems simply to take over the rules and prohibitions of those that have gone before), and I find the following:

"The rules regarding case are arbitrary and are befogged by shifting usages, but they are still on the statute books and the student must attempt to understand them." What statute-books? Apparently, books which are closed to the linguist, who supposes in his innocence that the usage of the well-bred and the well-washed, however shifting, must be the criterion.

"Singular pronouns are required for the following singular antecedents: any, anybody, each, each one, either, every, everybody, everyone, nobody, person, sort, type." Required by whom? (Are *anyone* and *no one* exceptions to this rule, or were they merely omitted through inadvertence?)

In a list of principal parts, only *got* is listed as the past participle of *get*, despite the obvious fact—obvious, that is, to any one with ears and eyes—that *gotten* is very much alive in the English spoken by the best speakers in our country and in that written by our best writers. It is by no means obsolescent, although the handbooks would have us either repudiate the evidence of our ears and eyes or assume that an overwhelming majority of nonacademic speakers and writers and quite a few academic ones (even in departments of English) are using old-fashioned English. Old-fashioned by what standard? As a matter of fact, in many cultured circles "have got" would seem somewhat questionable.

There is the usual warning, repeated from countless predecessors, to "dis-

tinguish between the adjectival 'due to' and the adverbial 'because of,' " with the statement that "*due to* should be directly attributable to a noun," a rule which has not had much validity in fact for a great many years.

After all this and much more with which anyone who has "had" freshman English must be perfectly familiar, it seems the height of broadmindedness for the authors to inform us that "a preposition may stand at the end of a clause or a sentence," as in "Whom did you ask for?" which, though certainly correct, still seems somewhat self-conscious: *who* in such a construction has very distinguished precedent, Steele, Lamb, Jane Austen, Conrad, Meredith, Yeats, and Kipling having used it in similar sentences in which only *whom* would meet the requirements set up by English I.

It is to be feared that the time spent in instilling these rules—which, as I have tried to show, have little validity in fact but are, instead, based upon notions held by writers of handbooks—is utterly wasted. Students may learn to "correct" sentences involving the moribund subjunctive or the distinction between *shall* and *will*, a distinction seldom made in General American (and I am referring to "good," that is, to educated General American—the language of Mr. Herbert Hoover, General Eisenhower, and Governor Thomas Dewey); but does any teacher fool himself into believing that these distinctions are carried out of the classroom? No, the moment the bell buzzes, *shall* and the subjunctive are completely abandoned. The proof of the pudding: educated speakers of General American such as those I have mentioned.

I remember an elementary-school teacher with whom I was afflicted a long while past. This worthy man had learned from a book that people—presumably

even people from that part of the Atlantic seaboard from which I derive—should pronounce the *h* in such words as *which*, *why*, *where*, *when*, *wheat*, *whisper*, etc. He drilled us carefully in this pronunciation, strange to us small descendants of London Englishmen who for generations had not pronounced the *h* in such words, and we docilely learned to pronounce the *h* in his class—and only there. To this day "the baby whales" and "the baby wails" sound exactly alike in my pronunciation, as they do in the pronunciation of many speakers in all parts of the country, cultured and uncultured alike. Speakers of that widespread type of American English called by scholars "General American," which has characteristics of the English of the North of England, pronounce the *h* just as naturally as I fail to do so. Who is to say which is "correct"? Incidentally, my son had exactly the same experience as mine at his school in Baltimore, where he had a teacher highly conscious of the supposed social importance of pronouncing the *h*; she had no doubt read about it in a book or had taken a course in "correct" speech, for she was herself a native of those parts and had probably learned laboriously to say [*hw*] because she thought it more elegant, though not to do so is literally the King's English, as well as Mr. Churchill's and Mr. Eden's.

* Many teachers, apparently not content merely to teach, believe that they have some sort of divine mission to "improve" the standards of American English. This is a laudable enough ambition. But what shall be our standards, assuming that people of any consequence would submit to such a process of standardization? Are we to accept the rules set up by academic arbiters, worthy people but many of them quite ignorant of the history of the language, most of

them teeming with notions of what language *ought* to be, notions derived from heaven knows where. As for myself, I am not likely to; nor have I any desire to dictate how others shall speak and write. Frankly, I have no idea what is best to do for those who are more concerned with "improvement" than with sense, who think that the English language should be more elevated, more "proper," more subservient to eighteenth-century notions of logic than is the English language actually heard in Westminster Abbey, the House of Lords, or the meetings of practically any learned or professional society in our own country.

Any plea for a more realistic approach to English usage is likely to be met with some such question as "How would you like your child to go about using double negatives?"—a question which, incidentally, indicates complete misunderstanding of the point of view of the scientific grammarian. Its answer, I hasten to add, is: "I wouldn't, because the double negative is low; it has no social standing at the present time." For there is nothing "liberal" (in the current sense of that much-abused word) in what has been called the "liberal" point of view toward language. It is essentially aristocratic; the whole thing boils down to fashion, the usage of the well-bred rather than the fiat of the schoolmarm. A Texas millionaire speaks in one way; a Boston Brahmin in another; a Virginia landed gentleman in still another. All are speaking "correct" English, for reasons which, though essentially superficial, perhaps even meretricious from the point of view of *douce*, earnest souls, should be obvious. There is no reason why all should speak alike, even if it were possible to make them do so. It is likewise with the doctrine of "correctness" in writing: fashion and good form justify many expressions

at present condemned by the handbooks and by the linguistically untrained or unobservant teacher of English. And there is no higher authority, human nature being what it is—not what it perhaps should be—than fashion and good form. The scientific attitude will probably never be generally accepted because it is too difficult—much more difficult than learning a set of grammatical rules and then proceeding to make others learn them. Clarity, unity, straight thinking, organization, are all more important, I am sure, than the avoidance of *due to* as a preposition, the distinction between *shall* and *will*, and the uses of the subjunctive—and, incidentally, much harder to teach.

Because he has refused to proscribe what he knows from his own observation, supplemented by the painstaking research of more than a generation of scholars such as Otto Jespersen and Henry Cecil Wyld, to be perfectly reputable usage, it has been said that the scientific student of language has no standards. On the contrary, he has very high standards indeed—standards not based upon what someone thinks ought to be but derived from the practice of the best writers and speakers; standards which are frequently at variance with those set up by the prescriptive grammarians, the writers of handbooks, and the teachers, who, incidentally, would in all innocence maintain that they were simply following the "best usage," as if that could be done by refusing to admit the reality of linguistic change, by holding fast to a conception of language whose principal tenet would seem to be that practically any change which has occurred since *ca.* 1700 (for the authoritarian grammarian is usually not conscious of what took place before that date) is to be regarded as deterioration and corruption. His standards are, I fear

frequently "undemocratic"; for, being a realist in this respect at least, he does not assume that schooling will make a gentleman or even that it can confer that air of well-bred ease which is recognized as culture; rather, that the first business of education is the acquirement of knowledge and the learning how to deal with it. He is unwilling to assume, however flattering the assumption may be to him, that the potpourri of rules, regulations, and prescriptions cooked up by his guild of academic chefs has any relation to knowledge or, for that matter, that it has any real validity. He is, as the late H. W. Fowler has so neatly put it, "neither on the side of the angels (university professors, that is) nor on the side of the devil (who is the nearest vulgarian)" but takes his stand "with the ordinary (or lazy but civilized) human being." He makes no pretense of knowing better how the English language should be written or spoken than those who have written it and

spoken it effectively, gracefully, powerfully; who have wielded it to great purpose with sincerity, clarity, lucidity. He is content to observe, putting his own aesthetic preferences aside, and to induce his rules—if, indeed, he is interested in rules as such at all—from the actual usage of these writers and speakers. He knows that he is merely hampering the process of communication so long as in the classroom he is expected to stress the singularity of *everyone* and the evil of the dangling participle, even when unambiguous, above sound learning, straightforward thinking, and effectiveness of expression—desiderata unlikely to be achieved by means of the current conception of an English language that never was on sea or land, a language which those responsible for the glories of English literature *ought* to have written but which, unfortunately for the best-laid plans of the prescriptive professors, they seldom bothered to write.

The Use of Essays To Measure Improvement

PAUL B. DIEDERICH¹

I ONCE asked the head of a Freshman English course how he could tell whether his course did the freshmen any good. His first reply was that the plan of the course was so obviously superior, the materials were so carefully chosen, and the staff was so competent that it could not fail to produce good results. I asked him whether these points were conceded by his colleagues and students, and he replied that some had the temerity to doubt them. I then inquired whether we could use what the students wrote to demonstrate that improvement had oc-

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curred. He thought we could, for the marks on papers written at the beginning of the year were always lower than the marks at the end. That evidence was not convincing to me, because it is an old custom to scare the students by giving low marks at the beginning and then to encourage them by giving higher marks toward the end. Besides, the instructors might only become accustomed to the peculiar idiom of their students and view it with less displeasure at the end of the year than at the beginning. The head of the course then replied that he could show me papers written by the same stu-

dents at the beginning and end of the course in which the improvement was obvious. I hated to be unreasonable, but I could not accept even this evidence. For years I had given a six-hour examination at the end of our Freshman English course, and the students had written a long essay in the morning and another long essay in the afternoon of the same day. By a judicious selection of papers I could show almost as great an improvement during the lunch hour that day as he could show in the course of a year. Everyone knows that students write some papers better than others. One has only to select the right papers to demonstrate either improvement or retrogression.

At this point the chairman fell back on the argument that he was dealing with intangibles, and to expect results which could be weighed and counted was to aspire to a foolish rivalry with the physical sciences. I was ready to agree that it is hard to prove the value of a Freshman English course, and perhaps for this reason our students, colleagues, and administrators often suspect that it has no value. At any rate, in almost every college the Freshman English course is always under attack and always undergoing reorganization. No one ever knows whether the current form of the course produces any discernible improvement in reading and writing or whether the successive forms of the course produce more improvement or less. It would clear up a great deal of confusion if we could devise some simple and convincing yardstick which would detect improvement and give at least a crude and approximate indication of its amount.

The standard response of the educationist to this problem is to propose an objective test. There is more sense in this

proposal than most college English teachers realize, because objective tests of reading and writing can now be made sufficiently subtle and penetrating to disclose the higher levels of skill in these arts. At present, however, such evidence would not be convincing or meaningful to the English staff. The only test in which they have confidence is an essay, and they do not see how essays can be compared in order to discover how much improvement in reading or writing a course has produced.

There is a way to do it, however. Have the students write a paper on a given text or topic at the beginning of the year. Do not read or mark these papers at the time; simply store them away. During the last month of the course have them write a second paper on the same text or topic, without any warning in advance that it will be the same. Tell them not to give any hint that they have written on the same subject before, or their paper will not be counted. After the ink on the second set of papers has faded sufficiently to be indistinguishable from the first set, turn both sets of papers over to a confederate who has no vested interest in the course. He is to scramble both sets of papers together and then number them in the order in which they happen to fall. Students should write their names and the date only in one corner of the first page of each essay. The confederate writes the number of the essay in this corner and also a few inches away from it; then he tears off the corner. The paper is then identified only by the number which remains on it, and there is nothing to indicate who wrote it, or whether it was written at the beginning of the course or at the end. The papers should be graded in the usual fashion by the most reliable and sensitive readers on the

staff of the course and be returned to the confederate. By reference to his numbered corners he will sort them into beginning papers and end papers and add up the number of grade-points earned by each set. If the papers written at the end have a far larger total of grade-points than the papers written at the beginning, it is clear that improvement has taken place. The bias of the staff could not affect the result, for they had no way of knowing which papers were written at the beginning and which at the end. If the beginning and end papers have about the same number of grade-points, either no improvement was made or the staff was unable to detect it.

The fear of this result may dissuade many staffs from attempting such a rigorous self-evaluation. Too many of them have acquired the skepticism of their colleagues as to the value of their course. It may encourage them to know that this sort of evaluation has been carried on several times at the University of Chicago, and the results have always proved highly gratifying to the English staff. The most spectacular gains were made by a small sample of the less able students who were required to take two courses in English. Only 14 per cent of the papers they wrote at the beginning were graded higher than D. After two years of training their grades approximated a normal distribution: 40 per cent C, 30 per cent above C, and 30 per cent below. Nearly one-fourth of these students made F's at the beginning and only 3 per cent at the end. Since both D and F are unsatisfactory grades, it could be said that only 14 per cent of these students were able to write an acceptable paper at the beginning of the two courses and 70 per cent at the end. When these results were announced, one member of

the staff summed up the general feeling by saying, "If this is evaluation, let us have more of it."

There was also some evidence that skill in writing rusts with disuse, for one group, tested at the end of the course, made an average gain of 2.33 points; while an equally able group, tested a year after they had finished the course, with no further training in writing and little practice, maintained an average gain of only 1.30 points. This finding was one factor in bringing about more continuous attention to writing in the College program.

If it can be arranged, it is desirable to have a representative group of students not enrolled in the English course submit to the same tests and be graded along with the rest, with nothing to indicate that they have not taken the course. When this was done at Chicago, it was found that this group also made a slight gain—probably from the general intellectual stimulation of the College—but the gain was the least of any group tested, and, when a statistician went to work on the figures, he announced that this gain was not "statistically significant"; it could have occurred by chance. In all the other gains reported there was less than one chance in a hundred that they could have occurred by chance.

After such results have been established, they can be used as a base line for comparison with the results of revisions of the course. This year, for example, an experimental section of a proposed new course was evaluated by the same technique at the University of Chicago. A decision on the new course had to be made after it had been running only four months, and hence the results were not entirely comparable with the results previously reported; but it was alarming to

find that the students in the experimental section had made an average gain of only 0.69 point in the four months, while students in the regular course during the preceding year had made an average gain of 2.33 points at the end of seven months. Given time, such results will take the annual reorganization of the Freshman English course out of the realm of guesswork into the realm of demonstrated results.

Our experience with this method of evaluation suggests a few cautions. The most important is that only the most sensitive and reliable readers can be used for this work. In each evaluation we have made, some readers have detected twice as much difference between beginning and end papers as others. It is a fair presumption that with a good course, bright students, and competent instructors, considerable improvement was made; but some readers were more sensitive to it than others. They could not simply have imagined it, for at no time did they know which papers were written first or last and it would be too much of a coincidence to suppose that they consistently imagined excellence in the papers which were written last and took a more realistic view of those which were written first. Even if only a small sample of the papers can be read, these sensitive readers should be the ones to do it.

The second caution is that one must not be discouraged by small differences in average gains. An average is exceedingly sluggish when one has only five letter-grades to deal with. The average at the beginning will probably be C-; hence there would be only two higher grades to achieve even if all the final papers made A's—which is absurd. We spread out the grades by using plus and minus signs as well as the five letters, and

in computing the results we use a numerical scale from 0 for F up to 11 for A. Even so, the highest average gain thus far reported has been 2.60 points on this scale: roughly, the distance between D and C. It is more impressive to show what per cent of students received each letter-grade on their initial and final papers.

A third caution is that, if there are two or more readers, each one should grade both the initial and the final papers of the same students, although the papers should come to him in a hopelessly jumbled order, and he should not be told that he has two papers from each student. Some readers tend to grade higher than others, and, if the high-grader happens to get an undue proportion of the beginning papers, while the low-grader happens to get an undue proportion of the end papers, the results will be disappointing and spurious. But if each reader grades both the initial and the final papers of the same students, slight differences in the general level of grades will not matter.

Finally, it is necessary to have courage. Freshman English has been the butt of the campus for so many years that it is almost impossible for its staff members to believe that their work actually makes any difference. In their hearts they will fear this proposed method of evaluation, and they will think of hundreds of clever objections to avoid it. If they would take a sporting chance and try it, they would probably find that they were doing their students far more good than they realized and infinitely more than their colleagues realize. If our experience is any criterion, a reasonably good Freshman English course can produce astonishing improvement. It is true that our students are brighter than average, but the most remarkable gains have always been regis-

tered by the weaker students. Even if the first results are disappointing, the staff may gain prestige from its honest and courageous effort to evaluate the results of its work. As it tries various changes, evaluates them, and holds fast to those

that work best, it can gradually amass a set of tested results that may supersede the annual shakeup of the course by the power of rhetoric alone. At last the process may even introduce some stability into our troubled lives.

A Course in World Literature

BOYD GUEST¹

GENERAL STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

THROUGH no choice of our own, we are living in the twentieth century, and we had better accept the fact. Science, if not politics, is rapidly making One World of all mankind, and our power politicians should accept that fact. No man can hope to escape his destiny, which now more than ever before is conditioned by forces and events everywhere. There are no longer any ivory towers; perfected weapons of warfare can shatter the most remote refuge of complacency. We are clearly destined to a greatly accelerated era of internationalism in trade, in art, and in literature—or to destruction.

The headlong current of history—i.e., the atomic bombing of Hiroshima—has routed us all from our burrows. If we would be men, our only course is to face life courageously, armed with disciplined intelligence. We urgently need maps of the mind to supplement and interpret our maps of the physical universe. It is increasingly important that we understand, as clearly as possible, the chief implications of existence. We must know something of our natural environment and of man's constant struggle to control its hostile aspects. We must become aware of the problems of our social envi-

ronment and of the compromises deemed necessary for harmony and survival. We must use our energy in fighting real enemies of mankind, not in creating and destroying imaginary elements alleged to be hostile to man. No less important is the need for a personal philosophy, something to live by. We must study man in nature, man in society, man as an individual—and to these must be added a fourth division that surveys the means of educating one another and ourselves. More and more the study of world literature must be called upon to afford the needed aid.

Formal education ought to contribute much to the broadening and clarifying of our experience. But the modern demand for specialists in every field has forced most American institutions of higher learning to sacrifice the broad concept for the narrow. Inevitably, then, we annually graduate thousands of specialists—physicians, teachers, engineers, pharmacists, journalists, and foresters—but we graduate very few educated individuals who are really prepared to cope with an ever more complex world.

It is encouraging that professional societies and faculty committees are at present examining entrenched curriculums and, in some instances, effecting modifications. The future graduate need

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not deserve the common reproach that he has learned more and more about less and less; for, if the proposed new requirements in general education for specialists are instituted and if they have the desired effects, the graduate will at least have an inkling of what is considered to be most significant in areas of knowledge beyond his own narrow field. In areas of political science we especially need men possessed of the mental cosmopolitanism of Jefferson and Franklin.

A course in world literature—under whatever name it may be given—complements general surveys of the various sciences: natural, physical, social. Civilizations wax and wane, great cities crumble into dust on windy plains, but ideas survive. No age can afford the supreme arrogance of rejecting the wisdom of the past. The world at any moment is the product of all that has been. The passage of centuries, even millenniums, does not invalidate truth; and the searching mind soon comprehends the meaning of "ageless." And, more important, such a mind will set ageless truths against the ignorance and prejudice of the present. To this end the present course will not accept the *either-or principle* of Mr. Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago, who states that we must accept *one* of two disciplines: Aristotelianism or medieval scholasticism. This course will examine both and will accept whatever is found in either which contributes to the third great discipline—scientific synthesis, which, though it contains the dynamics of our civilization, Mr. Hutchins rejects. On the other hand, this course will not accept the blind arrogance of scientific determinism as defined by Spencer, Comte, Huxley, and projected into philosophy by John Dewey and others; it will recognize the limitations of

science suspected by Emerson and Thoreau and demonstrated by Bridgman and Einstein; it will tend toward agreement with Sir James Jeans that "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine."

The several selections in each major division of this course should be considered not as a final or authoritative statement, to be accepted without question. The wise teacher will welcome critical challenge by alert students. A classroom should become, to some degree, a forum for analyzing the selections and for weighing their applicability for modern situations. In the matter of education there should be room for implementing differences of opinion.

No single book of excerpts can do more than skim the surface of the vast body of world literature. A student who desires to read more extensively in particular authors will find in the appendix to the syllabus for our course a list of titles for supplementary reading; the list is, however, selective rather than comprehensive.

By way of final comment, it may be remarked that the search for truth is one of the principal justifications for living. *Cogito, ergo sum* is as fitting a slogan for us as it was for Descartes in the seventeenth century. The dust that we naïvely associate with ancient books is really in our unstimulated minds. Blow out the dust and see how fresh and clear ideas really are, and how vigorous. To paraphrase Lowell and to agree with Rousseau, there's enough dynamite in many of these great "traditional" classics to destroy all existing institutionalized ills. Opponents of the present method of teaching world literature call it superficial. Obviously, the danger of superficiality lies not in the material but in the handling and focus of attention.

DEFINITION AND METHOD²

Literature, as defined for this course, is a thoughtful interpretation and criticism of life for men and women who search for human values. It is the written record of significant critical attitudes toward human existence as presented by intelligent writers who illustrate, attack, or defend multiple principles of life. This course is predicated upon the assumption that it is through a nation's literature that one arrives at a real definition of its culture; it is further assumed that a critical appreciation of one's own culture—with its promises and disappointments, its affirmations and denials, its exaltations and degradations—is prerequisite to *humanity* (defined by Walt Whitman as having no geographical, racial, economic, political, or religious barriers). World literature, obviously, should not be organized on the basis of nationalistic, linguistic, and ethnological classifications, which tend to disunite mankind.

The purposes and methods, then, of a course in world literature are essentially the same as for any course in any literature. The method of study for any selected unit of literature will transcend the "art for art's sake" of the purely *belletristic* approach. The "mechanics of literature" will be noted wherever significant, but the principal emphasis will be upon critical evaluation by means of the intellectual approach; for, in the last analysis, this course will adhere to Emerson's thesis that "not metre but metre-making argument" makes literature. In general

any given unit of literature will be studied by means of emphasis upon as many of the following approaches as are significantly related to the unit under examination: (1) *aesthetic*, (2) *historical*, (3) *philosophical*, and (4) *sociological*. For the purposes of this course, these terms are briefly defined as follows:

1. The *aesthetic* approach searches for the artistic value of the literature. It asks: How good is this poem or novel as a work of art? And it insists that, no matter what other values the work possesses, it is poor stuff as *literature* if the artistic qualities are weak. A work of art must first be judged by established criteria for the art in question, and the exact nature of such criteria must be defined for each form of literature (such as criteria for poetry, drama, the essay, the short story, and the novel). It must be remembered that the definition and form of any particular literary art is usually decided by the needs and standards of its own age.

2. The *historical* approach attempts to reconstruct the age and the literary milieu in which the literature was written, in order to understand it. This approach asks: What did this piece of literature *mean* to the readers who were the contemporaries of its author? Any period course must answer this question for its literature before the literature can be judged or *used for any purpose whatsoever*. But this obvious fact is sometimes forgotten by the curriculum-makers and by those who would use literature merely to confirm or deny a philosophy of life, a religion, or a political theory. For example, Emerson has been claimed by the rugged individualists, the Socialists, the Christian Scientists, and both religious conservatives and progressives; the cure for such fantastic claims is a historical reading of Emerson. The *historical* is im-

² I am indebted to Professor H. W. Reninger, chairman of the department of English and speech, Iowa State Teachers College, for the principle of organization and for much of the phraseology used in defining the four approaches to the study of literature presented below.

portant to check excesses in the philosophical.

Not only does the historical approach define the meaning of a piece of literature in its own immediate time, but it also identifies the various literary movements within a total age and interprets the humanistic meaning of a civilization.

3. The *philosophical* approach attempts to reveal the author's philosophy of life or his interpretation of the meaning of man, who is involved with natural forces, supernatural power, and with other men. It searches for ideas, interpretations, and criticisms of life and for the author's contemplative powers. It relates literature to philosophy, religion, theology, and science and attempts to "place" the author in some philosophical stream of meaning, sometimes in a "school" of thought. This approach asks: What is the author's interpretation of the meaning of man in the total scheme of things, in the universe—or as he is related to a supreme being?

4. The *sociological* approach attempts to reveal the author's theory and judgment of society as society expresses itself in matters of justice, morals, social equality and inequality, and even politics and economics. This approach asks: What is the author's theory or criticism of society? What is the relationship between the individual and society?

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To define and illustrate the great literary tempers or traditions in world literature: a) classicism; b) romanticism; c) realism.
2. To show that world literature offers the most significant and valid history of human experience. In implementing this objective, we shall study world literature with reference to:

- a) Man and his cultural heritage
- b) The origins of man and life
- c) Scriptures of some living faiths
- d) The unfolding universe
- e) Foundations of the state
- f) Man against fate and man in bereavement
- g) The conduct of life
- h) Worlds of the mind and spirit
- i) Man at work
- j) Man in love
- k) The critical intellect
- l) Creative imagination
- m) The happy life and the utopian dream

THE COURSE IN OPERATION

During the summer of 1947, world literature was offered for the first time at Iowa State Teachers College. It is easy to appreciate the difficulty of trying to implement the objectives stated above in terms of world literature in one quarter's work of five hours per week. Given that limitation, I believe the course was far more successful than hoped for. In spite of the fact that world literature is required for neither English majors nor English minors, the class was filled to maximum enrolment for literature courses offered here. I believe that I found the materials to be interesting and stimulating to more than 80 per cent of the class. Through many hours of reading, not only did the members of the class acquire some concept of a vast, interdependent body of literature dedicated to the record of man's existence, but they also showed marked improvement in critical analyses of both literary and humanistic values. Several students read for more than two hundred hours in materials beyond minimum readings; one student did more than three hundred hours of such reading. The result of the

latter study alone crystallized into a credo wherein the student expressed her views so effectively that the editor of our college literary magazine, *The Pen*, has assigned more than half the space in the current issue for publication of this student's essay.

During the summer session of 1947 we used Addison Hibbard's *Writers of the Western World* as the basic text. A series of twelve lectures on major literary figures was presented along with the materials for study and discussion, as indicated by the calendar below:

June 6 Explanation and orientation: the seven literary tempers; twenty-six areas of literary, intellectual human experience.

I. THE TEMPER OF CLASSICISM

- 9 WWW, Introduction and Homer (ninth century B.C.), pp. 3-53. Lecture: "The Language of All the World."
- 10 WWW, the Bible, pp. 54-70. Discussion of scriptures of several living faiths.
- 11 WWW, Aeschylus and Sophocles, pp. 70-110.
- 12 WWW, Euripides, *Medea*, pp. 110-30.
- 13 WWW, Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, pp. 130-56.
- 16 WWW, Plato, *The Apology*; Aristotle, *The Nature of Tragedy*, pp. 156-75.
- 17 WWW, Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (first century B.C.), pp. 180-91.
- 18 WWW, Virgil, pp. 191-224.
- 19 WWW, Horace, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucian, pp. 224-50.
- 20 WWW, Montaigne, pp. 250-57; Racine, *Phaedra*, pp. 309-28.
- 23 WWW, John Milton, pp. 260-87.
- 24 WWW, Molière, *The Misanthrope*, pp. 287-309.
- 25 WWW, Voltaire, from *Candide*, pp. 366-81. Summary; brief quiz.

II. THE ROMANTIC MOOD

- 26 WWW, Introduction, pp. 389-404; Ovid, pp. 404-13.
- 27 WWW, from *Beowulf*, pp. 427-42.
- 30 WWW, from *The Nibelungenlied*, pp. 442-53.
- July 1 WWW, Dante, from *The Divine Comedy*, pp. 473-88.
- 2 WWW, Boccaccio, from *The Decameron*, pp. 493-506; Rabelais from *Gargantua*, pp. 511-22.
- 3 WWW, Cervantes, from *Don Quixote*, pp. 522-34; Spencer, from *The Faerie Queene*, pp. 537-47.
- 7 WWW, Shakespeare, *Sonnets* and *Songs*, pp. 551-55; *King Lear*, pp. 555-96.
- 8 WWW, *King Lear—Continued*.
- 9 WWW, Rousseau, pp. 596-613.
- 10 WWW, Goethe, from *Faust*, pp. 613-43.
- 11 WWW, Burns, pp. 543-52; Wordsworth, pp. 658-70.
- 14 WWW, Shelley, pp. 700-714.
- 15 WWW, Heine, pp. 732-35; Victor Hugo, pp. 735-50.
- 16 WWW, Emerson, *The American Scholar*, pp. 756-64.
- 17 Written quiz.

THE SYMBOLISTS

- 18 WWW, Poe, pp. 820-33; Baudelaire, pp. 833-39.
- 21 WWW, Ibsen, *The Master Builder*, pp. 839-74.
- 22 Ibsen—Continued.

III. THE REALISTIC TEMPER

THE REALISTS

- 23 WWW, Chaucer, pp. 902-27.
- 24 WWW, Balzac, *Old Goriot*, pp. 934-45; Gogol, *The Cloak*, pp. 945-59.
- 25 WWW, Turgenev, *Mumu*, pp. 959-72.
- 28 WWW, Walt Whitman, pp. 974-78, 984-88.
- 29 WWW, Dostoevsky, pp. 989-97; Leo Tolstoy, 1009-28.

THE NATURALISTS

- 30 WWW, Introduction, pp. 1069-75; Zola, *The Fight in the Laundry*, pp. 1084-91.
- 31 WWW, Gorki, *Chums*, pp. 1092-1100; Dreiser, pp. 1101-12.

THE IMPRESSIONISTS

- Aug. 1 WWW, Introduction, pp. 1113-17; The Bible, pp. 117-18; Stephen Crane, "The Charge," from *The Red Badge of Courage*, pp. 1150-57.
- 4 WWW, Henry James, *The Liar*, pp. 1118-42.
- 5 WWW, Introduction, pp. 1166-72; Nikolai Yevreinow, *The Theatre of the Soul*, pp. 1172-78.
- 7-20 The last ten meetings of the class will consist of summary lectures relating the major subjects listed under the second specific objective (see above) to the literature studied. Part of the time will be devoted to class discussion of those subjects which can be closely related to the experience of the students. It is hoped that there will be some time for class discussion of the more valuable term papers. It is further hoped to give some attention to oriental literature.
- Final examination.

It was obvious from the beginning that the available text, limited to the Western world and relying heavily on the "classical method" of dividing literature into three major tempers—classicism, romanticism, and realism—did not satisfactorily meet the needs of the course as outlined. Therefore, for the winter quarter, 1947-48, we adopted *World Literature*, by Christy and Wells, as the basic text. Such adoption may not prove wise because the discursiveness (nationally) of materials and their classification by subjects tend to lead one away from the main stream of great literature as an effective, unified presentation of the humanistic tradition. We hope to cope with this seeming contradiction by presenting

lectures orienting and defining the relation of the very greatest world literature to the tradition of humanity. This "compromise" promises to afford a logical "base of operations" from which one may launch in the various directions indicated by the referent subjects listed under "Specific Objectives" earlier in this article. Whatever the result, granted knowledge of Christy and Wells's *World Literature* as the text, the following calendar for the winter quarter will, I trust, indicate a logical relationship between *materials* and *purpose* within the course:

- Dec. 2 Explanation and orientation: The seven literary tempers; twenty-six areas of literary and intellectual human experience.
- 3 Introductory lecture: "The Language of All the World."
- 4 WL, Man and His Cultural Heritage, pp. 3-35; lecture: Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides.
- 5 Quiz sections: Discussion of above, including pp. 3-35 in text.
- 8 Lecture: Sophocles and Aristophanes.
- 9 WL, The Origins of Man and Life, pp. 35-57. Discussion.
- 10 WL, The People's Story, pp. 57-91. Discussion.
- 11 WL, The Critical Intellect, pp. 405-29. Lecture: Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle.
- 12 Quiz sections: Summary discussion of the week's work.
- 15-16 WL, Creative Imagination, pp. 165-93. Discussion.
- 17 Lecture: Virgil and Dante.
- 18 WL, The Unfolding Universe, pp. 193-235. Discussion.
- 19 Quiz sections: Discussion.
- Jan. 5-6 WL, The Foundations of the State, pp. 321-81. Discussion.
- 7-8 WL, Man against Fate, pp. 549-95.
- 9 Quiz sections: Discussion.
- 12-13 WL, Man in Bereavement, pp. 623-55. Discussion.
- 14 Written quiz.
- 15 Lecture: Shakespeare, Montaigne, and Cervantes.

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| 16 | Quiz sections: Discussion. | 12 | Lecture: Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. |
| 19-21 | <i>WL</i> , The Conduct of Life, pp. 655-725. | 13 | Quiz sections: Discussion. |
| 22 | Lecture: Milton and Rousseau. | 16-17 | <i>WL</i> , Man at Work, pp. 969-99. Discussion. Term paper due on February 16. |
| 23 | Quiz sections: Discussion. | 18 | Lecture: Walt Whitman. |
| 26-29 | <i>WL</i> , The Happy Life, pp. 907-31, and The Utopian Dream, pp. 999-1025. Discussion. | 19 | Lecture: Émile Zola and Thomas Hardy. |
| 30 | Quiz sections: Discussion. | 20 | Quiz sections: Discussion. |
| Feb. 2-4 | <i>WL</i> , Worlds of the Minds and Spirit, pp. 735-93. Discussion. | 23-25 | <i>WL</i> , Voices of the Forum, pp. 931-69. Discussion. |
| 5 | Lecture: Goethe and Nietzsche. | 26 | Summary lecture: "Great Literature and the Humanistic Tradition." |
| 6 | Quiz sections: Discussion. | 27 | Quiz sections: Discussion. |
| 9-10 | <i>WL</i> , Man in Love, pp. 783-827. Discussion. | | Final examination. |
| 11 | Written quiz. | | |

After Reading Poems by Thomas Merton

Was it for this that you reserved a part
 Of you unto yourself until today . . .
 Love, not dependent only on the heart
 But, as a book come carefully your way,
 A book whose text burns barriers of the mind
 With words and rhythms breaking music's spell,
 With metaphors to make the earth-eye blind,
 The air-ear deaf, hands still, tongue numb to tell?
 Was it for this translation you retained
 A child's belief in miracle and breath,
 A child's awareness that all life contained
 Dream into dream, year into year, till death?
 The soul selects its love in final choice
 With reverence defeating wisdom's voice.

MAXINE BRINKLEY

CHICAGO

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, JULIUS C. BERNSTEIN, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*chairman*)

JAMES B. MCMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

WHEN-CLAUSES AFTER IS (WAS)

The following excerpt from one of Shelley's letters illustrates the type of clause which I shall discuss: "I have long been convinced of the eventual omnipotence of mind over matter . . . and *my golden age is when the present potence will become omnipotence.*"

The status of this locution has been the subject of contention for many years. As far back as 1868, Gould Brown (*A Gram. of English Grammars*) asserted: "The adverb *when*, *while*, or *where*, is not fit to follow the verb *is* in a definition, or to introduce a clause taken substantively; . . . as, 'Concord, is *when* one word agrees with another in some accidents.' " Brown "corrected" this sentence (which he quoted from a definition in Gould's edition of Adam's *Latin Grammar* [Boston, 1832]) to read: "Concord is *the agreement of* one word with *another*. . . ." This attitude has been taken by the great majority of textbook- and handbook-writers ever since. Some condemn the construction, more or less unqualifiedly, as does Jones:¹ "Avoid an inexact use of *when* or *where*. . . . Our mistake *was when* we failed. . . . A regent *is when* a sovereign is unfit. . . ." Other writers² state that it may not be used in *formal* writing. And Marckwardt and Walcott,³ in commenting on specific items in the S. A. Leonard study,⁴ remark that of the seven groups of judges who par-

ticipated in the study the linguists were much more lenient than any of the other groups, "a majority regarding the locution as admissible in colloquial English." Furthermore, after consulting the works of several historical grammarians, I found that only two, namely, Curme⁵ and Maetzner,⁶ mention this construction, evidently with approval. Curme classifies the construction as a predicate clause and gives two examples: "Now *is when* I need him most. . . . It *was when* I was a mere lad that I first met her." Maetzner lists but one example—from a work by Robert of Gloucester (*ca.* 1300?): "This was *tho [when]* in Engoland Britones were." Neither the *OED* nor Webster's *New International* gives an example of this construction.

My research on this problem shows: (1) that this type of clause has been used in the English language⁷ at least since the early part of the thirteenth century, (2) that it has not been confined to any one level of the language, (3) that it has appeared in a considerable variety of syntactical types, and (4) that all these types are essentially definitions.

⁴ *Current English Usage* ("English Monographs," No. 1) (Chicago: Pub. for the National Council of Teachers of English, 1932).

⁵ *Syntax* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1931), pp. 196-97.

⁶ *An English Grammar* (London: John Murray, 1874), III, 429.

⁷ While I have not studied the history of this construction in any of the foreign languages, I did run across the following example in Dante's *Paradiso*, Canto IV, ll. 73-74: "Se *violenza e quando* che parte, niente conferisce a quel che isforza. . . ." The editors of the Temple Classics edition translate this sentence thus: "If *violence is when* he who suffereth doth naught contribute to what forceth him. . . ."

¹ *Practical English Composition* (3d ed.; New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941), p. 111. See also Thomas, Manchester, and Scott, *Composition for College Students* (5th ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 678.

² E.g., Foerster and Steadman, *Writing and Thinking* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941), pp. 141-42.

³ *Facts about Current English Usage* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938), p. 115.

The examples which I have collected fall into four types.

In type 1, the *when*-clause is usually immediately preceded by *is* or *was*, which in turn is immediately preceded by it.⁸ The following example illustrates this type: "For experience tells us that *it is only when freedom of opinion becomes the compulsion to debate that the seed . . . has produced its fruit*" (Walter Lippmann, *Atlantic Monthly* [August, 1939], pp. 190-91).

In type 2, the *when*-clause is immediately preceded by *is* or *was*, which in turn is immediately preceded by one of two demonstratives, namely, *this* or *that* (I have only one example with a relative pronoun—with *which*). This type is illustrated by the following excerpt: "True, Hitler wrote 'Mein Kampf.' But *that was when he was propagandizing to achieve power*" (Raymond Clapper, *Yale Review* [Spring, 1942], p. 605).

In type 3, the sentence is introduced by the word *time*, which in turn is immediately followed by *was* plus the *when*-clause. Thus: "*Time was when you could map out the country for yourself . . .*" (Augustine Birrell, *Obiter dicta* [2d ser., 1888]).

Type 4 contains two varieties, one of which is homogenous, while the other is rather heterogeneous. Thus:

VARIETY A: Here a noun, which is the subject of the main clause, stands unmodified before *is* or *was*, which in turn is followed by the *when*-clause, as in "*Morning is when I am most awake and there is dawn in me*" (Thoreau, *Walden*).

Compare also "*Liberty is when you are free to do what you want to do . . .*" (Sandburg, *The People, Yes* [1936], No. 61).

VARIETY B: In this variety, the noun or pronoun which is the subject of the main clause may have pre- or postmodifiers of different kinds. Examples:

"*Oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is when a free man . . . is*

⁸ For this use of *it* see Webster's *New International*, meaning No. 5, under *It*. As already stated, there is no example given of our construction.

constreyned . . ." (Chaucer, "The Tale of Melibeus," ll. 2755-56).

"*A simile or comparison is when the resemblance between two objects . . . is expressed . . .*" (Samuel Kirkham, *English Grammar* [105th ed., 1840], p. 223).

"*The false, unnatural, and destructive system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer . . .*" (Ruskin, *Unto This Last* [1860]).

"*The last view that we gain of the precious pair is when they later appear before Olivia . . .*" (O. J. Campbell, *Shakespeare's Satire* [1943], p. 83).

"*The time to relieve the inequities and reduce the burdens is when the Government has a large surplus in sight*" (*Monthly Letter on Economic Conditions*, National City Bank of New York, April, 1948, p. 2).

Before proceeding to a discussion of the syntax of this locution, I should like to point out that the list of authors who have used it is a rather impressive one, covering, as I have already mentioned, a period of time from the early thirteenth century to 1949. In addition to those from whose works I have taken the excerpts listed above, I might mention the following: Spenser, Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Browning, Stevenson, Hardy, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, Stephen Crane, Melville, Howells, Henry James, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and E. A. Robinson. And there are others. In the field of English scholarship, G. L. Kittredge, John M. Manly, Carl Van Doren, Granville Hicks, and E. L. Tillyard have all used this construction. And I have found it in all kinds and types of periodicals, learned and popular. It would seem evident that this construction should no longer be disparaged.

What is the syntax of this *when*-clause? Is it, as Curme claims, a predicate clause? I am fairly certain that Maetzner and Jespersen would agree with Curme, and I am not going to quarrel with this point of view. However, in those sentences which I have classified in types 2, 3, and 4 the *when*-clause may be treated as an adverb clause, for the

verb *is* or *was* in these sentences has the meaning of "to come into existence, come about, happen, occur, take place," which is one of the meanings that the editors of both the *OED* (*Be*, I. 2) and Webster's *New International* list for this verb. Treating the *when*-clause in these three types as an adverbial clause removes the main objection of those who have condemned the construction. But, in sentences which I have classified under type 1, the verb *is* or *was* is a linking verb, or copulative. It does not have the meaning "to come into existence, come about," etc., which it does in types 2, 3, and 4. For example, in the sentence (type 1): "*It is when* he gets into national and international affairs that Mr. Ford is beyond his depth," it is at least awkward, if not impossible, to replace the verb *is* with "exists, or comes about, or occurs." On the other hand, in the sentence (type 3, variety B) which I have taken from Ruskin, the verb *is* can be so replaced without changing the meaning. Thus: "The false, unnatural, and destructive system *exists* [*occurs, happens, etc.*] when the bad workman is allowed to offer." But there is a further complication. In sentences of the type 1 class the pronoun *it* anticipates a *that*-clause, and this clause can be made into a *when*-clause and be used as the subject of the sentence. For example, in the sentence: "*It is when* he gets into national and international affairs *that* Mr. Ford is beyond his depth," the last clause can replace the pronoun *it* if *that* is changed to *when*. The sentence would then read: "*When* Mr. Ford is beyond his depth *is when* he gets into na-

tional and international affairs." Likewise, in sentences of the type 2 class the demonstrative *this* or *that* points back to a previous statement, and this statement can be turned into a *when*-clause and be used as the subject in place of the demonstrative. The example which I have listed under type 2 can be changed to read: "*When* Hitler wrote '*Mein Kampf*' *was when* he was propagandizing. . . ." When we make these substitutions, we see that that *when*-clause in both types is a true predicative,⁹ for the verb (*is* or *was*) here is purely linking—a function or form word.

In conclusion I wish to state that while I have no objection to considering the *when*-clause in all these types as a predicative, as Curme does, I prefer to call this clause a predicative in type 1, a predicative or an adverb clause in type 2, and an adverb clause in types 3 and 4. My study of this construction gives pertinency to Jespersen's¹⁰ comment: "All this reminds one that there are very few hard-and-fast rules in grammar."

RUSSELL THOMAS

⁹ I am not contending that sentences of this kind should be written. As a matter of fact, I have found but one example: "*When* the music really speaks, *when*, in a word, it is really itself, *is when* the performance reveals the true intensity. . . ." This sentence was used by Olin Downes, in the *New York Times*, July 16, 1948, Sec. X, p. 5.

¹⁰ *A Modern English Grammar* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1927), Vol. II, Part III: "Syntax," 18.9. Incidentally, Jespersen made this comment near the end of his discussion of what can be predicative!

Freshman Theme Reader (ca. May 1)

A gibbering idiot I
A thing of dots and dashes
Of colons, slang, and flashes
And verbs that multiply,
And verbs that multiply,
And verbs that multiply.

BROOKS BAKER

NEWTONVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

Round Table

A REJOINDER TO PROFESSORS PERRIN AND MCCRIMMON

Weaver's article, "To Write the Truth," in *College English*, October, 1948, was so stimulating that I referred it to our professor of philosophy, who, in turn, made it required reading for his classes. Then I forgot it until it was bitterly attacked by James M. McCrimmon and Porter G. Perrin in *College English*, January, 1949. Mr. McCrimmon, without stating what he assumes Mr. Weaver's position to be, asserts that Mr. Weaver is in "fundamental opposition" to Messrs. Kenyon, Malone, and Thomas. This seems also to be Mr. Perrin's position. In addition, he endeavors to point out various approaches to the truth, one of which he assumes to be Mr. Weaver's.

It may be that Mr. Weaver is guilty of all the crimes attributed to him, but the evidence is not in the article. Mr. Weaver is arguing that we must concern ourselves with what our students say as well as with how they say it. If that is heresy, it is a heresy long overdue. *Vere loqui* is more important than *recte loqui*. That is not saying that *recte loqui* is not important. Mr. Weaver merely insists, "Whoso stops here confesses that education is only instruction in mores." I assume, then, that he uses gladly all the research of Messrs. Kenyon, Malone, and Thomas.

In the second place, must one assume that, because Mr. Weaver wants the truth written, he knows what it is? Mr. Perrin thinks he knows what Mr. Weaver's truth is; perhaps he does, but he did not get his knowledge from the article. Personally I think Mr. Weaver's version of the truth is irrelevant. The necessity enjoined on us is to teach the truth as we see it, nor do I think

the responsibility can be shrugged off. Pilate tried that dodge, but it was hardly successful.

RICHARD G. WENDELL

CENTRAL COLLEGE
PELLA, IOWA

A BEAD FOR DONAHOE

Robert W. Stallman's paraphrase and critique of Edward Donahoe's short story, "Head by Scopas" (*College English*, April, 1948) is almost as impressive in its way as the story itself. Armed with the Flaubertian epigram that compares fictional theme and symbols to a string of beads, Mr. Stallman has re-created a tensile chain of matched and graduated pearls. Yet there is one important pearl—almost a keystone—missing from the explication, a bead which I became aware of only in class discussion of the story.

After reading "Head by Scopas" to my writing course to exhibit the technique of cumulative symbolism, I was taken aback to find that two of the best students thought that the unnamed narrator (I will call him "N") was a woman. An examination of the text actually unearthed no phrase to prove N a man, but three items implied it: "Alan wore a gee-string"—a male covering (outside the burlesque show) in skiing, while N "wanted to be brown all over and said so"; N refrains from asking Alan "if women ever kissed" his infected face, supposing that he would be "repellent to most women"; and N jocularly declines to "double-date" (my ugly phrase) with Alan, Alan's girl Hedwige, and Hedwige's mother. These are ambiguous facts, it is true; but a review of the story with an ear to N's tone discloses his obvious maleness. And anyway, if N were a woman, Donahoe would have to indicate the fact to

contrast N's and Hedwige's feelings for Alan.

But the curious reaction of my students convinced me that in "Head by Scopas" there is some basic ambivalence unmentioned by Mr. Stallman. And that surely must be N's homosexuality. Items: N's attitude toward Alan as a painter and as a guide to the Alps can only be described as "catty"; N compares the right side of Alan's face to "one of the *beautiful* heads by Scopas" (my italics); although N says that he is "not interested in knowing" about Alan's affection for Hedwige, he later probes jealously into the comparative intimacy of the relationship; and, finally, N gives vent to an agonized curiosity to read Hedwige's letter against Alan's wish, even to the point of wresting it away from Alan and scanning it behind a bolted door. Would a mere masculine "friend" do these things? Isn't N's special affection for Alan superficially casual but inwardly repressed until Alan tells him about loving a girl? Doesn't the discovery turn N's feeling into active jealousy of that girl?

The theme of the story is indeed "love and friendship," as Mr. Stallman provocatively reveals. (The Austen title mentioned in the first paragraph should be spelled *Freindship*, by the way.) But I hope I am not being naively obvious when I point out that N's feeling for Alan is more or less than normal friendship, that his jealousy of Hedwige is a major bead on the string of this remarkable story.

FREDERICK L. GWYNN

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

TESTING—BUT HOW?

Considerable credit must be given Professor Buchan for raising the issue of testing poetic appreciation in his article in the May, 1948, issue of *College English*. Testing techniques are a major problem in the classroom teaching of poetry, though they are often disregarded in discussions of how it may best be taught. It is true that one of the teacher's

duties is to discover how far the student has managed to penetrate into the nature and meaning of the poems that he has read. The only question, therefore, is one of method. How can the teacher make sure that an act of appreciation has taken place in the student's mind? And how shall this appreciation be measured?

At the outset, it may be well to decide just what term shall be applied to the experience that we are testing. "Appreciation" has always seemed to me too vague a word to be quite suitable or accurate, and it has sentimental connotations. It suggests the pant-and-palpitation method once so fashionable in the teaching of poetry. Too often it means an uncritical emotional reaction. "Response" is somewhat more satisfactory, though it must be qualified as emotional, intellectual, or imaginative. Since the general critical vocabulary lacks an accurate term for the thing we are testing, we can do no better than use this term "response" in place of the older and more conventional word "appreciation."

The response aroused in the reader of a poem is of two sorts: he may respond to the poem as a whole or to its details separately considered. The total response cannot be measured by any testing technique now known because it remains, for the average reader, beyond the reach of words. Its adequate expression demands the penetration of a skilled critic, and he would have to perform that most difficult of all intellectual feats, the analysis of his own reactions. At this task even great literary critics have not been uniformly successful. And even if this total response could be satisfactorily revealed, it would be too individual and varied to serve as the subject matter of a testing technique.

On the other hand, response to details can be measured quantitatively. It is practical to question the student on details of idea, reference, and image and to require that he train himself to select them from the context of a poem. But is there not a danger that the student may misunderstand the nature of poetic response? Is it sound to assume that

a knowledge of detail is equivalent to an "appreciation" of a poem? I question the wisdom of allowing a student to conclude that, because he has been able to isolate certain facts and references, he has arrived at a state which can be called "appreciation." One cannot say that, because a student knows the age of the "Highland Girl" or remembers such details as the song of the nightingale, he has an iota of understanding of the poem as a whole. In other words, it is doubtful whether the student transfers his understanding and feeling from the detail to the totality of the poem. The testing of details is just what the phrase implies—a testing of details and nothing more.

This is not to deny the importance of details in accurate reading. However, I fear that the method outlined by Professor Buchan might tend to distract a student's attention from the obvious truth that a poem is a web of relationships and that no detail stands alone in the complex of the poem. One must see these details in relation to one another before one has what can be termed an "appreciation" or a "response." Thus in "We Are Seven" it is as important to realize the climactic effect of the repeated questionings as it is to emphasize the fact that the little girl "did not understand" that her brother and sister were dead. In fact, this latter statement is misleading, for the real point seems to be that she knew factually that they were dead but preferred to imagine that they were still alive; only in that way could she continue the warm sense of intimacy which their living presence had brought her. Unless we are to imply that this little girl was a low-grade moron, any statement that she "did not understand" that her brother and sister were dead forces the student into a misreading of the poem. Again, in "The Affliction of Margaret" the fact of the son's absence bears the same relation to the poem as the seed has to the flower. The seed is not the flower, and the fact is not the poem. It is more critically wise to ask what Wordsworth gained by using the dramatic approach to his subject and what would have been the effect of present-

ing the poem in a straight narrative manner. Thus one could teach the student an insight into the relation between the poet and his material and also between the poem and the reader. In short, questions of detail unrelated to the purpose and theme of a poem might well be discarded in favor of questions that compel some measure of thought about poetry and its nature.

Lest I be accused of "missing the point" of Professor Buchan's article, let me say that I realize that the sort of questions proposed herein would be much harder to grade than simpler ones of detail and that possibly no "objective" evaluation of them could be made by a conscientious teacher. But the alternatives, it seems to me, are irreconcilable; one either drills the students in the recognition of isolated details or stimulates them to meditate on the nature of the poem. But the former method does not lead inevitably to the latter result.

PAUL E. REYNOLDS

RHODE ISLAND STATE COLLEGE

WHAT DO STUDENTS READ?

We who assign reading to students may well inform ourselves about their independent interest in books and magazines, for students do read of their own initiative. And what they read by choice may be more vital to them than what they read by compulsion. The works which a teacher may assign in the eighteenth century, for instance, will have to come into relationship with works which young people have freely elected. Inevitable comparisons will be made. Just what they may be and how they may function lie beyond the limits of this study. Yet keeping in mind the fact that these vital comparisons are being made will add significance to the data which we examine.

There are two summary statements which we should make in order to focus our attention upon the principal matters before us. The first is that students do have intellectual interests and do read in order to satisfy them. The second is that students have

a marked preference for the good, even for the religious and the mystic.

Some of the charges brought against the mental and spiritual habits of university students give point to these asseverations. That young people may not have turned to some master-document dear to a research scholar causes him to brood upon their narrow intellectual interests. He, in turn, may be ignorant of a work which to them is momentous. And as he probably should not be called a "fuddyyduddy" by the students, so they should not be called "unmental" by him. Again, students have been charged with dibbling in pornography. Paul Gallico, for instance, himself writing in *Esquire* and drawing upon a highly special experience, charges them with not knowing "the difference between right and wrong," with not being able "to distinguish between . . . decency and indecency."

The data which we have to consider were gathered not from a special and peculiar source but from a general and a fair source. Although we do not name the university in which they were gathered, it is no mean institution. Among the leading universities of the Middle West it has an honored place. It draws students from all over the world who think and do the things that students from all over the world think and do.

Two hundred and forty-six students in the Division of Arts and Sciences filled out the questionnaire which was handed them—filled it out with that unexceptionable faithfulness with which they are accustomed to treat matters presented to them. There were a few manifestations of playfulness here and there, enough to add authenticity to the results. For instance—and the student had not read Paul Gallico—there was the flashy scrollwork about the name of a magazine which had influenced the student more than any other—*Esquire*. However, a rather subdued but similar artistic reference to the *Ladies' Home Journal* brought all into balance. About two-thirds of the questionnaires were filled out by women, one-third by men; for this man's school is not yet back to normal. Since it may be assumed that women

are more sensitive to codes and customs than are men, the ratio seemed fortunate. There were 7 sophomores, 113 juniors, 106 seniors, and 20 graduate students. Many of the men were veterans.

One request brought out surprising results: "List five books which in the home where you grew up had the greatest *formative* influence upon your mind." There were comparatively few students who had not grown up in homes where there were fair library facilities. But a group of 23 students who had grown up in homes where there were fewer than one hundred books nevertheless listed 61 titles. These same students when asked to list the books they had read during the past year "on their own," omitting all work done for class credit, set down 77 titles. Another group of 115 students remembered 215 works which had influenced them when they were young and named 268 that they had read "on their own" during the past year. A third group of 108 students listed 181 books that had had a formative influence upon them and 239 which they had recently read to satisfy their "own intellectual curiosity." The variety in these readings was astonishing. The quality would satisfy any teacher of literature over fifty years of age. In fact, I do not remember one cheap or tawdry title in the entire record except for the single reference to *Forever Amber*.

Equally interesting were the statistics which had to do with the reading of magazines. The first group listed 37 which had been available to them in their homes. This group only showed a falling-off in magazine reading, dropping to 31 in this past year. But the second group enlarged its list from 56 to 65, and the third group from an even 50 to 62. Again variety marked the record. The tabulation of preferences, to which we shall presently come, will bear scrutiny.

Truly shocking to the Paul Gallicoes—and, to borrow a trope from the gentle Whittier, may they be like nests of electric eels in their bathtubs—are the data regarding the books of greatest formative influence. As we look at the data, we should remember that no questionnaire was signed.

	Votes
1. Holy Bible	86
2. <i>Little Women</i>	35
3. <i>David Copperfield</i>	22
4. Shakespere's plays and sonnets	21
5. Emerson's <i>Essays</i>	17
6. <i>Tale of Two Cities</i>	17
7. <i>The Robe</i>	13
8. <i>Tom Sawyer</i>	12
9. <i>Treasure Island</i>	11
10. <i>Jane Eyre</i>	9

This might be called "*The Late George Apley* list." One could, were it now to the point, make some easy guesses about the inclusion of many of these titles. Yet there they are; and, for whatever reason they were set down, they cannot represent early decay of the moral nature.

Perhaps more significant are the titles which make up the personal reading list of this past year:

	Votes
1. <i>Peace of Mind</i>	23
2. <i>The Robe</i>	17
3. <i>The Fountainhead</i>	15
4. <i>Gentleman's Agreement</i>	14
5. <i>The Prophet</i>	11
6. Holy Bible	10
7. <i>Anna Karenina</i>	10
8. <i>Inside U.S.A.</i>	10
9. <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	8
10. <i>Kingsblood Royal</i>	8

These two lists together give the Bible a rating of 96. The next highest rating, that of 30, goes to *The Robe*. *Peace of Mind*, *The Fountainhead*, and *The Prophet*—significant titles—in the one year gather a total vote of 49. The meaning of these preferences is not to be mistaken. Neither is there any need, in the presence of any fair mind, to insist upon the meaning. The need is to know the facts and then to deal with students understandingly in the light of the facts.

What shows up in the reading of magazines? Where does the vote fall? The questionnaire asked two things: (1) What did you read? (2) Which magazines most influenced you? For the first years, then, we have this

record. To avoid some insignificance and confusion, we shall take the first six titles only:

Magazine	Vote	Influence
1. <i>Reader's Digest</i>	143	65
2. <i>Life</i>	123	27
3. <i>Time</i>	122	49
4. <i>Saturday Evening Post</i>	84	13
5. <i>National Geographic</i>	61	20
6. <i>Esquire</i>	4	0

If anything is suggested by this list, it is normality. One might even suspect inherited Republicanism. And one has to go far down the list before he comes upon anything so liberal as the *New Yorker*.

So our students leave home and come to the university. What happens? The following tabulation shows not only the magazines they read but, more important, the ones which they continue to read:

Magazine	Vote	Continue
1. <i>Time</i>	133	92
2. <i>Life</i>	127	87
3. <i>Reader's Digest</i>	84	67
4. <i>Saturday Evening Post</i>	42	26
5. <i>New Yorker</i>	60	17
6. <i>Esquire</i>	8	1

Obviously the *New Yorker* is the rising star of this galaxy. What does not appear should be expected: *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and *Newsweek* begin to rise. The *Atlantic Monthly*, for instance, receives twenty-eight votes and is continued in twelve instances.

It is not the purpose of this study to draw conclusions from the facts which we have before us; the facts themselves should be sufficient. They would not seem to permit a variety of judgments about the reading habits and the intellectual interests of the students in a great midwest university. Knowing these facts might hearten teachers of literature and might make possible for them wiser approaches to the problems of the classroom.

BENNETT WEAVER

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Report and Summary

About Education

FRANKLIN T. BAKER, THE SECOND president of the National Council of Teachers of English, died February 3 at his home in Yonkers, New York. He was eighty-four.

As professor of the teaching of English in Teachers College, Columbia University, for forty years (1893-1933) Dr. Baker was a major figure and influence in the profession. The department of the teaching of English, which he founded and led until his retirement, was the first in an American university. He was co-author (with G. R. Carpenter and Fred N. Scott) of *The Teaching of English in the Elementary School and the Secondary School*, one of the earliest books in the field and for many years a dominant manual.

All who knew Dr. Baker will always remember his genial, slightly quizzical smile, his quiet poise, his (at least apparently) spontaneous class hours, his enthusiasm for literature. Few persons are so completely adjusted as he was.

"A SAMPLING OF COMPOSITION ERRORS of College Freshmen in a Course Other than English" is reported by Phil C. Lange in the *Journal of Educational Research*. Of 261 papers produced by the first writing assignment in a course in human growth and development, about 3 per cent were illegible, about 5 per cent free from misspellings, and more than half had more than four different misspellings. The students had average language abilities when measured by standardized achievement tests, but their papers were so careless that by proofreading they could have corrected one-third of the misspellings and one-half of the punctuation errors. Many felt that it was unfair to expect them to write well in a course other than English. The assignment may have been

poorly motivated, but apparently their high-school training had not developed habits and ideals of writing well—except in English classes.

THE NCTE CONVENTION IN CHICAGO last Thanksgiving is favorably noticed by Paul B. Diederich in the "Educational News and Editorial Comment" of the January *School Review*. But principally it is used as a springboard for launching the question whether it would not be better to abolish English classes in favor of compulsory reading periods in the library and English-teacher supervision of speaking and writing in other courses. Some of the unpleasant facts which Mr. Diederich cites should challenge teachers of English to improve their performance.

AN "ENGLISH TEACHING CENTER," designed in 1945 by Co-ordinator Luzerne W. Crandall and the secondary-English training teachers of the University of California at Los Angeles, was broadened in scope in the fall of 1948 when the in-service department of the Los Angeles Board of Education took over the project to include teachers of language-communication skills from the elementary school through junior college to adult education. Six members of the Los Angeles Public Library staff cooperate.

Eminent leaders in varied lines of educational work have served as featured speakers of the group which meets in the central public library lecture room on stated Saturday mornings from 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. for discussion of classroom problems of all those who *teach* or *use* in their teaching the language-communication skills. The first hour is given to an inspirational talk by the

guest speaker, and the second hour to an open discussion of such issues as formal versus functional "grammar" teaching, teaching literature "as a weapon" for intercultural education, teaching the "nonverbal-minded" pupils, etc. In-service training credit is offered by the Los Angeles Board of Education to those teachers in regular attendance.

The whole project is based upon the two guide-line principles: "*English is a basic tool of all teaching-learning*" and "*Every teacher is an English teacher perforce.*"

Our information comes from Myrtle

Crowley Force, UCLA training teacher. Would not similar projects be practicable in other cities?

TWO RECENT PHOTOPLAYS OF INTEREST to teachers of English have been made the subjects of illustrated discussion guides. Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* is treated by Max J. Herzberg in a booklet published by Publicity Department, Universal Pictures, 445 Park Avenue, New York City. Orson Welles's *Macbeth* is treated in a guide written by Hardy R. Finch and published by Republic Pictures, 1790 Broadway, New York 19.

About Literature

THREE VERY DIVERSE ESSAYS ON the craft of writing, all three of which for divers reasons should be stimulating and helpful to students are: "The Life of Literature," by Stephen Spender, in the November through January issues of the *Partisan Review* (now a monthly); "The Reading and Writing of Short Stories," by Eudora Welty, in the February *Atlantic Monthly* (to be continued); and "The Hostile Necessity," by Maxwell Geismar, in the *Saturday Review of Literature* (January 29).

Spender's recollections are delightful. They form a portion of an autobiographical work in progress. Partly narrative and anecdotal, partly analytic and explanatory, they give a good picture of what poetry means to a very young man who hopes to be a poet, and of that young man's progress in his art. His friends and fellow-writers—Auden, Eliot, Sackville-West, Harold Nicolson, D. H. Lawrence, Christopher Isherwood, and others—appear from time to time, to have their say about the imaginative and creative processes. The final effect upon the reader is of having listened in upon some very good conversation among some brilliant but occasionally daffy writers.

Miss Welty's essay is based upon what to some might seem an old-fashioned premise, namely, that stories are written to be enjoyed! She makes very clear that enjoying does not require that the author and the reader shall be easy on each other. "I mean

only not to bother the story—not interrupt and interpret it on the side as if the conscience were at stake. To see it clear and itself, we must see it objectively." All that any of us can *know* about writing, she thinks, is what it seems like to us. "It's not an imitative process." There is a Great Divide between criticism and writing a story. "The fact that a story will reduce to elements and can be analyzed, does not necessarily mean it started with them—certainly not consciously. A story can start with a bird song." And again. "A story is not the same thing when it ends that it was when it began. Something happens . . . the writing of it. It *becomes*. And as a story becomes, I believe we as readers understand by becoming too—by enjoying." How would we wish a story of our own to be understood? she asks. "By way of delight—by its being purely read, for the first fresh impact and the wonder attached; isn't this the honest answer? It seems to me that almost the first hope we ever had, when we gave someone a story all fresh and new, was that the story would *read new*. And that's how we should read." There is much more, of course, and all of it is invigorating.

Geismar is a young American literary critic who has already published two volumes in a series dealing with American novelists. His essay will give help (and solace) especially to students embarking upon the composition of research papers, and to

their teachers, whose dicta his essay will eloquently footnote, for what he describes with great intimacy are the actual processes of literary research: reading problems, how horrible it is when you can't read the notes you took several weeks before, what sometimes happens to The Outline, how in pursuit of emphasis what you thought was the central idea may vanish and a new one sharpen up, the birth pangs of the first draft, the sweating out of successive revisions, the exasperation of afterthoughts. What the student sees are all the tools he's been taught to use being used. What will cheer him will be the discovery that even experienced writers sometimes find them slippery.

"CONFESSIONS OF A PLAYWRIGHT," by William Saroyan in the same issue of *Tomorrow*, paints a very painful picture of what it means in our time for a writer of plays to try to get a play produced. He describes specifically and in detail the dictatorship of the Dramatists Guild; the unpleasant machinations of agents, producers, and directors; the uneasy role of the drama critic; and finally the newest wrinkle in try-outs, the tryout in a private home before potential financial backers. By the end of three or four pages the reader is willing to agree with Saroyan that "the playwright who expects to do his work with a free heart must simply arrange life to survive pleasantly with very little money."

SOVIET LITERATURE IS IN A VERY sorrowful state, according to Robert Magidoff, who tells why in an article entitled "Writing in the USSR" in the winter *Antioch Review*. The chief reason for the prevailing mediocrity is to be found in Magidoff's own question: "How can artists soar to heights of inspiration when they are placed in strait jackets of fear?" The Party keeps Soviet publication under the strictest control and censorship. Soviet artists, among other things, "must not create 'non-political' works; show appreciation of anything foreign, criticize the Party Line or the leaders in the remotest way; be purely lyrical or be pessimistic. On the other hand,

Soviet artists must rebuff 'the hideous slanders and attacks against our Soviet culture' (Zhdanov); stress the ideological and human superiority of our people brought up by our socialist regime (Simonov); participate dynamically in the achievement of the current objectives of the Soviet Union be it the Five-Year plan, reconstruction, or a hate-America campaign." As Magidoff points out, ukases to the effect that great works of art be written cannot accomplish that sublime aim. "What is needed is freedom, the 'right to err' without fear of reprisal."

"AN AMERICAN LITERATURE Again," by Berry T. Spencer in the winter *Sevanee Review*, inquires into the way in which literature becomes American. After discussing various elements and concepts which presumably enter into its composition, he concludes that American literature is "a complex of several potential responses on the part of the reader" and that "a national literature may after all be responsible enough if it can use native symbol and native experience to suggest the nature and destiny of man."

A NEW MAGAZINE IS TO COST \$30.00 a copy or \$150.00 a year (bimonthly). The *Nation's Heritage*, published by B. C. Forbes & Sons, is primarily a picture magazine reproducing paintings, etchings, and woodcuts to show the greatness of America's heritage. Text is confined entirely or practically to the captions explaining the pictures. There are 389 such pictures in the first issue, which was displayed to 250 bookmen and newsmen at a luncheon in the Waldorf-Astoria, New York City, January 11. Several hundred institutions have already subscribed. The picture (we did not buy a copy!) of the magazine indicates a large page and a binding like that of an ordinary case-bound book.

This magazine illustrates the trend to substitute pictures for print which provoked the article on "Reading Pictures: Report of a Unit," by John C. Raymond and Alexander Frazier in the *English Journal* last October.

Books

AMERICAN POETRY IN FRANCE

Once in a while a book falls casually into our hands. We read it with mounting enthusiasm—and humility. *La Poésie américaine "moderniste" (1910-1940)*¹ is such a book. Miss Raiziss, an American poet-critic of Russian lineage, has read and inwardly digested our poets as well as Louis Untermeyer, *Poetry*, and David Daiches. She has not become bogged down by any one American coterie of criticism. It is refreshing to cross an ocean and read in French an articulate and sensitive evaluation of our American poets—disheartening to return, lay down the book, and be able only to wish that something as concise and unbiased were available for American readers of poetry. An English edition of this work would be serviceable to teachers and students alike. The French edition, issued in a well-known library, is sure to have a wide circulation.

MAXINE BRINKLEY

CHICAGO

FOR CLASSES IN CRITICISM

*Criticism*² is a collection in textbook form of critical essays by various authors, mostly English and American of the twentieth century. It will acquaint the reader with the scope and emphasis of modern criticism and

¹ Sona Raiziss, *La Poésie américaine "moderniste" (1910-1940)*. Traduction de Charles Cestre. Paris: Mercure de France, XXVI Rue de Conde. Pp. 133. Fr. 75.

² Mark Shorer, Josephine Miles, and Gordon McKenzie, *Criticism—the Foundation of Modern Literary Judgment*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948. Pp. 553. \$5.00.

lure him on to further thought and study. It does not escape the curse of all anthologies, the superficiality and confusion which will overwhelm the unarmed reader and increase the daze in the undergraduate mind unless the instructor takes pains to provide some basis for sorting and centering the points of view, assumptions, or schools represented. Those who expect an introduction providing a historical sketch or elucidation of basic concepts will be disappointed; the Introduction is really a preface briefly presenting a rationale for the selection and some suggestions for alternative orderings to meet differing needs.

The choices made are often excellent: Read on surrealism, Winters on the experimental school, and Eliot's essay on Joyce, otherwise hard to come by. It is a pity that the anthology continues the stultifying academic tradition of confining itself to essays in English when modern critical thought is and should be getting more and more international.

The book provides background for the moderns by including a dab of Plato, Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Butcher translation now superseded, nothing of Longinus, and less ancient essays by Dryden, Young, Hume, and Coleridge. It could be argued that the modern critics would be better understood against a background of Bergson and Croce, Marx and Nietzsche, Freud and similar explorers on the periphery of science.

Cavil as we may, if we compare this volume with the wretched *Modern Book of Criticism* edited by Lewisohn a generation ago, we will congratulate ourselves on having come a long way.

NORMAN NELSON

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Brief Reviews

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

FOR THE GENERAL READER

Elephant and Castle. By R. C. HUTCHINSON. Rinehart. \$3.75.

Many, many characters. London between the world wars. A girl of good family chanced to see in a street brawl a young Italian from the slums. She befriended and married him somewhat against his will. He had his good points and some that were bad, but the girl was obsessed with a desire to reform and educate him. There are plots and subplots, not well organized, tragedy, humor, a suggestion of Dickens, and a murder. Colorful background. Interesting. 658 pages, small print. February Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

England to Me. By EMILY HAHN. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Emily is now living with her English husband and daughter in his old home in England. In a good-natured "with malice toward some" manner she pokes a lot of fun at English customs, parliament, and life in general. Amusing. (She may be right.)

The Dukays. By LAJOS ZILAHY. Prentice-Hall. \$3.00.

Hungary's foremost novelist wrote this novel during World War II while he was hiding from the Nazis. He is a Yale graduate. The Dukays were a large, a very large, family of the Hungarian aristocracy. The first chapters tell of the ancestral wealth, the family before World War I, their lands and castles, their imperialism. "The established order of things, whether in barracks or bureaus, came simply to this: who lived in fear of whom and why." The dissolution of the Dukay family, of land tenure, and of the government of Hungary came together, by the end of World War II. Count Dupi, the head of the family, died taking stock of his existence: youthful escapades, love affairs, the luxury of his palaces, his income and expenditures—in fine, the way he had "invested his moneys and his morals." A social study and political treatise, satirical, tragic, 795 pages.

Wicked Water. By MACKINLAY KANTOR. Random. \$2.75.

By the author of *The Voice of Bugle Ann*, etc., but very different. In 1899 the western cattlemen were being pushed about by homesteaders. What could they do? Bus Crow, notorious killer—he boasted of sixty-seven victims—was hired to solve their problems. This is an interesting study of the mind of an abused child—later to become the man who declared, "I'll always kill, get a gun and keep killing and killing." The devious ways of the cattlemen are also probed. Based upon fact. 216 pages. Good print.

The Fires of Spring. By JAMES A. MICHENER. Random. \$3.50.

By the 1947 Pulitzer Prize winner, author of *Tales of the South Pacific*. The story of the growing-up of David Harper, opening with his boyhood in a poorhouse where his aunt and guardian was employed. The chapters devoted to the love and protection given him by the old men are significant, rewarding, and beautiful. The later chapters describe his development. He was drawn into a world of petty thievery, bad women, and travel. This period was followed by ambition, college, editing, and determination to write a novel.

The Heat of the Day. By ELIZABETH BOWEN. Knopf. \$3.00.

Critics have called Miss Bowen the most distinguished living British novelist. The background of this novel is London of World War II. Stella Rodney, a widow with a grown son, is infatuated with a man of whose life she knows too little. There is another man who hints that he has information which he cannot disclose. There are few characters, but these are very real. A vivid story. Short. Good print.

An Edge of Light. By FRANK K. KELLY. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

A lengthy, unusual, and enlightening analysis of the book is presented on the jacket. "A novel that tells of headline hunters of the great press agencies and of the women who share their lives. . . ." There are press men who have seen battles in the mountains of Greece, Soviet reporters, others who have been in China and foreign hot spots. Revealing, intense, disquieting. The men who have seen and taken part in this war—those who survive—will surely, if the world lasts, "see the edge of light and make peace."

Popcorn on the Ginza. By LUCY HERNDON CROCKETT. Sloane. \$3.50.

During World War II the author, daughter of an army officer, spent—as representative of the Red Cross—twenty-two months in the South Pacific, three months in the Philippines, and eighteen months in Japan and Korea. She calls her book "an informal portrait." These are a skilled observer's firsthand experiences, varied, human, sympathetic, profound. She is not afraid to criticize both conqueror and conquered. She found the Japanese outlook "at least well shot with rays of hope—no conquered people ever knew defeat to taste so sweet."

Catch a Falling Star. By FREDERIC VAN DE WATER. Duell. \$3.00.

A story of Vermont during the Revolution. Authentic early Vermont, with Indian raids, negoti-

ations with the British in Canada, perilous missions, schemes, and counterschemes. History brightly threaded with romance.

The Walled City. By ELPETH HUXLEY. Lippincott. \$3.00.

Another story of British colonial administrators in East Africa, 1919 to World War II. The story is interesting from the beginning. Two oldsters in a London club hear the late war news and comment upon it. We meet "old Freddie"; homesick, scheming wives and their kind; but best of all we see a barbarian community pursuing its own way despite British overlords. A rewarding picture of two civilizations.

Yankee Folks. By EDWIN V. MITCHELL. Vanguard. \$3.00.

Yankees are usually presented as rather grim, but in this book we have an exception. Their character is complex, but a large collection of really amusing anecdotes proves that they have some sense of humor. There is an interesting chapter on hermits. Illustrations are old engravings. Quite readable.

Pursuit of the Horizon. By LLOYD HABERLY. Macmillan. \$5.00.

The life of George Catlin. As a young man Catlin dedicated his life to painting Indians. He followed them into Missouri and Mississippi and went into Canada and South America. He developed a genuine liking and respect for their way of life. He was a great collector, and we read with regret of the loss of his property. Many of his pictures survive, and the book is illustrated with them. Interest in Indians is growing. This book is good history and good reading.

Forty-niners. By ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$4.00.

The author spent years assembling the material of westward migrations and the California Trail. The story is told by a traveler who makes the trek from Independence, Missouri, to the gold fields. A story of suffering and heroism, of the little things that made up each day and night, of the songs the migrants sang, of the help the stronger gave the weaker, of the possessions they had to discard as the trip became more difficult and they found themselves ignorant and poorly prepared.

Sweden: Champion of Peace. By DAVID HINSLOW. Putnam. \$4.00.

How has Sweden kept out of war? A rapid survey of Scandinavian history up to World War II is informative. Sweden has kept out of war for one hundred and thirty years. There is a detailed account of the Swedish foreign policy and a survey of the present economic, social, and diplomatic position. Several reliable and well-informed Swedes have checked the accuracy of the book. More informative than forceful.

The Penal Colony. By FRANZ KAFKA. Schocken. \$3.00.

This collection, which includes no novels, contains all the writings which Kafka himself approved and felt would stand the test of time. "The Metamorphosis," "A Hunger Artist," "A Country Doctor," "Josephine," "The Singer," and "The Judgment" are representative. So much has been written about Kafka that readers will welcome these sensitive translations by Willa and Edwin Muir. Kafka always sought simplicity.

Henry David Thoreau. By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH. Sloane. Pp. 298. \$3.50.

A biographical and critical study of the man and his work and of his relation to American and world literature. First volume in a new "American Men of Letters" series.

The Way of a Fighter. By CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT. Edited by ROBERT HOTZ. Putnam. \$4.50.

Controversial. General Chennault has in the postwar period operated a civilian airline for the war-torn cities of non-Communist China and has a Chinese wife. He criticizes violently the role of the United States in China. He speaks frankly of his interviews and conversations with notables—Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang, General Marshall, General MacArthur, and others. He has no hesitation in condemning—angrily—faults in diplomacy and warfare, personal politics and conferences. He is enthusiastic about using airplanes for constructive purposes—building up a country.

Insight and Outlook. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. \$5.00.

Each individual, says Koestler, has the "self-assertive urge to be an independent unit" and the "self-transcending tendency to take [his] place as part of a greater whole." Scientific discovery, artistic invention, and moral action spring from the "self-transcending drives," while competition, war, etc., result from "self-assertive drives." Self-transcending drives, he believes, will win out in the end. Irwin Edman says of Koestler, "His special note is his canvassing of the subtle cross currents, the psychic oppositions in the soul of the contemporary intellectual."

The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-13, 1914-23. By FRANZ KAFKA. Schocken. 2 vols., \$3.75 each.

First publication of the complete diaries, a part of the mass of unpublished material left by Kafka when he died in 1924 at the age of forty-one. They include many dreams, short short stories, notes on a Yiddish theater troupe, prosaic details of his daily life, careful entries which were later used in stories and novels, with many pathetic and seemingly trivial observations and agonized introspections. "It is indeed a kind of wandering in the wilderness in reverse that I am undergoing," he moans.

Peaks and Lamas. By MARCO PALLIS. Rev. ed. Knopf. \$6.50.

Lavishly illustrated and beautifully designed. Mountain climbing in the Himalayas and very interesting information regarding the life, religion, and philosophic beliefs of the Tibetans. A book to own.

American Argument. By PEARL S. BUCK with ESLANDA GOODE ROBESON. John Day. \$3.00.

Mrs. Robeson, author of *African Journeys*, is the wife of Paul Robeson and has spent some years in Russia. Mrs. Robeson perhaps knows America better than the Chinese-bred Pearl Buck. Together they discuss a wide range of topics: the home, sex, marriage, woman's place in the home, politics, etc. Pearl Buck compares American ideals with those of the Chinese. Naturally Mrs. Robeson is much concerned with the minorities.

One-Way Ticket. By LANGSTON HUGHES. Knopf. Pp. 136. \$2.75.

Short poems written during the last ten years by the best-known Negro poet. They range from bitter protests, like the title piece, through pictures of Harlem life to personal lyrics, even love poems. Not allusive or symbolic and rarely figurative in language. Free verse.

Red Wine and Yellow Hair. By KENNETH PATCHEN. New Directions. \$2.00.

Poems, most of them short, notable rather for their passion than for their beauty. Some are as clear as the jacket blurb claims. Much of social protest and persistent, bald intrusion of sex.

Ivan Franko: Selected Poems. Translated with a biographical introduction by PERCIVAL CUNDY. Edited by CLARENCE A. MANNING. Philosophical Library. \$4.50.

Franko (1856-1916) was a patriotic poet of the western Ukraine (Galicia), a leader in arousing the spirit of an oppressed people ruled by Austria.

The American Drama since 1930. By JOSEPH MER-SAND. Modern Chapbooks (284 Montauk Avenue, Brooklyn). Pp. 188. \$2.00.

Essays on Kaufman, Rice, Odets, Clare Booth; on biographical plays, plays of social significance, plays written by women; and on the rediscovery of the audience's imagination.

Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. Simon & Schuster. \$5.00.

A brief summary of present scientific "knowledge," followed by a careful study of how we know anything and of how sure we should be that we know. Space, time, the validity of sensations and perceptions, the degree of probability of inferences, language as it enters into thinking and knowledge, are among the matters considered.

Basic Principles of Psychoanalysis. By A. A. BRILL. Doubleday. \$3.45.

Theory and its application by the founder of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

How the Great Religions Began. By JOSEPH GAER. Dodd, Mead. \$3.00.

Portraits of Jesus, Buddha, Kabir, Mahavira, Confucius, Lao-tsze, Zoroaster, Moses, and Mohammed and the developments of their religious systems. Illustrated.

The Trying-out of "Moby Dick." By HOWARD P. VINCENT. Houghton. \$5.00.

The author discusses the whaling literature used in the creation of *Moby Dick* and appraises Melville's place in literature.

Bleak House. By CHARLES DICKENS. Oxford. \$3.50.

Introduction by Sir Osbert Sitwell. With the original illustrations.

The Scarlet Letter and Selected Prose Works. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. Hendricks House. \$2.25.

Lengthy introduction by Gordon Roper.

The New British Poets. Edited by KENNETH REX-ROTH. New Directions. \$4.00.

An anthology. Lengthy introduction by the editor outlines and analyzes recent developments in British poetry. Short poems from more than 70 writers. Biographical notes. 312 pages.

The Family: Its Function and Destiny. Planned and edited by RUTH NANDA ANSHEN. ("Science of Culture Series," Vol. V.) Harper. \$6.00.

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The Law and You. By MAX RADIN. (A "Mentor Book.") New American Library. \$0.35.

An original, not a reprint. Untechnical exposition of the chief principles by an eminent liberal authority.

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American Punctuation. By GEORGE SUMMEY, JR. Ronald Press. Pp. 182. \$2.50.

Ever since his *Modern Punctuation* appeared in 1919, Professor Summey has been regarded as the chief academic authority on punctuation. His new book takes into account the considerable change in punctuation practices during the intervening three decades. It is more than a safe reference book; its

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How To Enjoy Poetry. By ROBERT FARREN. Sheed & Ward. Pp. 288. \$3.00.

Seven simply written chapters dealing with prejudices against poetry, difficulties in reading it, meaning, imagery, sound, and the emotional experience. Each chapter consists of Part A, an essay with some quotations, and Part B, quotations with some comments.

Writing: From Idea to Printed Page. By GLENN GUNDELL. Foreword by FRANK LUTHER MOTT. Doubleday. Pp. 374. \$5.95.

Case histories of three factual articles, two stories, and the illustrations for a third story published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Each case history begins with a (reduced) reproduction of all or part of the finished product, presents pertinent facts about the writing, tells something of the origin of the idea of the piece, and then exhibits methods of gathering material and full-size reproductions of each draft with related criticisms.

Sociometry in Group Relations. By HELEN HALL JENNINGS, in association with the STAFF OF INTERGROUP EDUCATION IN COOPERATING SCHOOLS. American Council on Education. Pp. 85. \$1.25.

A technique of discovering personal relations within a group by asking each member to choose three others to work with in an immediate activity. Tabulation and charting is followed by various means of finding why the individuals chose as they did. The information is used to form congenial groups and also to discover ways in which individuals and sometimes the group as a whole can be helped. Intergroup relations are scarcely mentioned in the booklet.

Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader. By B. RAJAN. Oxford. Pp. 171. \$3.00.

The major portion of this work attempts to see *Paradise Lost* through the eyes of Milton's contemporaries, but it also contains a valuable preliminary chapter surveying the field of Miltonic scholarship, another reconciling the theological dogmas of the poem and *De doctrina Christiana*; and at the end a new theory about Books XI and XII is advanced.

College Teaching and College Learning. By ORDWAY TEAD. Yale University Press. Pp. 56. \$2.00.

This is a plea for improvement, as well as a guide and manual designed for those who intend to go into or are already in teaching, by the chairman of the Board of Higher Education, New York City. As always, Professor Tead is stimulating and provocative. He is here concerned especially with the ineffectuality of the teacher both as a person and as a teacher, the nature of learning, and the possibility of improve-

ment of both teacher and learning processes. He thinks we really have not tried very much to improve either. We must.

Inside the Campus. By CHARLES E. McALLISTER. Revell. Pp. 247+21 tables. \$5.00.

Dr. McAllister spent a year getting answers to the question "What goes on in the American college?" He studied eighty-nine colleges and universities not just from questionnaires but from personal interviews and visits to the campus of each. This book is a fascinating and important report by a realistic educator on such varied topics as "Keeping Politics Out of the State Universities," "Communism on the College Campus," "Salary Increases since Pearl Harbor," and "Audio-visual Aids in Higher Education." The final section of the book contains a series of tables worked out in great detail, giving the findings on each institution surveyed.

College Publicity Manual. Edited by W. EMERSON RECK. Harper's. Pp. 246. \$3.00.

A working manual for all concerned with public relations in the educational field. Emphasizes special techniques for different media. Teachers will profit from a reading because it will help them to understand better their own role as publicists as well as the problems of the institution with which they are associated.

Useful pamphlets received are:

Henry Fielding: A List of Critical Studies Published from 1895 to 1946. By FRANCESCO CORDASCO. Long Island University Press. Pp. 17. \$1.00.

Walt Whitman and the Authorship of "the Good Gray Poet." By NATHAN RESNIK. Long Island University Press. Pp. 38. \$1.75.

English Prosody and Modern Poetry. By KARL SHAPIRO. Johns Hopkins Press. Pp. 16. \$0.50.

Introduction to Medieval Literature Chiefly in England. By ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS. 2d ed. with a reading list and bibliography. Columbia University Press. Pp. 32. \$0.60.

"Folksongs on Records." Compiled by BEN GRAY LUMPKIN. 428 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, Colo. Pp. 27. \$1.00. Mimeographed.

Chinese Ideas in the West. By DERK BODDE. Prepared for the Committee on Asiatic Studies in American Education. American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. Pp. 43. \$0.50. Illustrated.

The Teacher as Counselor. By DONALD J. SHANK and OTHERS. ("American Council on Education Studies.") Washington, D.C. Pp. 48.

Graduate Training for Educational Personnel Work. By CORINNE LABARRE. ("American Council on Education Studies.") Washington, D.C. Pp. 54.

Goals for Higher Education in the Pacific Coast States. Report of a Conference on Higher Education by the Pacific Coast Committee of the American Council on Education, July, 1948. Pp. 14.

Integration of the Humanities and the Social Sciences: A Symposium. ("Southern Methodist University Studies," No. 4.) University Press in Dallas. Pp. 92. \$1.50. Cloth bound, \$2.00.

The papers read and the reports of the main trends of discussion of a conference held at Southern Methodist University, in which sixty educators from twenty-six institutions participated.

Let's Learn To Listen: Radio, Everyone's Responsibility. By WISCONSIN JOINT COMMITTEE FOR BETTER RADIO LISTENING. Mrs. N. W. Madding (143 N. Hancock, Madison). Offset. Pp. 60. \$0.25.

Much good material for teachers—or for pupils—except that format is forbidding.

Inventory of Research in Racial and Cultural Relations. By COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN RACE RELATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. American Council on Race Relations (1126 E. Fifty-ninth Street, Chicago 37). Offset. Pp. 55.

Reading for Democracy. American Brotherhood, National Conference of Christians and Jews (203 N. Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1).

Separate lists for adults and children.

How To Improve Your Study Habits. By SAMUEL N. LECOUNT. Pacific Books (Box 558, Palo Alto, Calif.). Pp. 30. \$0.25.

Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials. Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville. Pp. 175. \$0.25.

Useful to teachers of English chiefly in connection with composition projects.

FOR THE STUDENT

Burke's Politics. Edited by ROSS J. S. HOFFMAN and PAUL LEVACK. Knopf. Pp. 536. \$4.75.

A volume which has been scrupulously edited by two men who do not merely appreciate the beauties of Burke's style but feel that his political principles are relevant to the issues which confront us today. It is not the usual anthology. Rather, thirty-one selections have been worked into chapters with organic unity to show the operations of Burke's mind. One could wish that these might have included at least one selection from the Minute Book of the Trinity College Debating Society or from the *Reformer*, the paper which Burke edited and largely wrote when still an undergraduate, for these already exhibit both his astonishing brilliancy and his precocious, ranging intellect. Nevertheless, the main purpose is well achieved.

Walter Pater: Selected Works. Edited with an Introduction by RICHARD ALDINGTON. Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. Pp. 557. \$5.00.

The Introduction by the British poet-critic is admirable. The selections are well chosen to show Pater's aesthetics and ideas on how to civilize the mind. However, Pater probably is turning in his grave at the dulness and heaviness of the format.

Modern American Plays. Edited by FREDERIC G. CASSIDY. Longmans, Green. Pp. 501. \$3.50.

Six contemporary plays of varying types—*Anna Christie*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Winterset*, *Watch on the Rhine*, *Life with Father*—with brief biographies of authors and reprints of dramatic criticisms.

American Literature: An Anthology and Critical Survey, Vol. II. Selected and edited by JOE LEE DAVIS, JOHN T. FREDERICK, and FRANK LUTHER MOTT. Scribner's. Pp. 967. \$5.00.

This second volume covers the period from 1860 to the present, and the selections are arranged under such general headings as "The Reaffirmation of Democracy," "The New Regionalism," "Perspectives in Philosophy and Criticism," "Directions in Fiction," "Directions in Poetry," etc.

The Heritage of European Literature, Vol. II. By EDWARD H. WEATHERLY, A. PELZER WAGENER, EDWIN H. ZEYDEL, and AVRAHAM YARMOLINSKY. Ginn. Pp. 775. \$5.00. Illustrated.

The editors continue their policy of limiting the number of authors represented in favor of relatively long selections. This volume includes French and German writings of the "Age of Reason" (1650-1800), German poetry and philosophy, French poetry and fiction of the nineteenth century, and sections on Russian literature before the Soviet era and after, as well as a few samplings of twentieth-century writings. In a volume of this size a few errors are bound to creep in, but one cannot help wondering how the immortal soul of William Butler Yeats is feeling at having his nationality listed as English!

A Guide for Oral Communication. By LELAND SCHUBERT. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 286.

A sensible, readable textbook for the freshman who can see the elements common to good speaking and good writing. The author does not go out on a limb for fancy communications courses. Nevertheless, although his main concern is for oral communication, he makes the student forcibly aware of the close relationship of competent seeing, hearing, reading, and thinking to effective speaking.

American College English. By HARRY R. WARFEL, ERNST G. MATHEWS, and JOHN G. BUSHMAN. American Book Co. Pp. 656.

A usage and composition handbook containing a year's work for college students. The first section

contains chapters on how to get going on a theme, how to revise, how to outline, and how to read, take notes, and give an informal talk. The second section is a complete usage handbook. The third is devoted to the principles of composition, with the main emphasis on exposition.

An Introduction to English Literature. By JOHN MULGAN and D. M. DAVIN. Oxford. Pp. 182. \$2.25.

A concise survey, based on Legouis' *Short History of English Literature*, with a final chapter bringing the account up to the beginning of the second World War.

Laird's Promptory: A Modern Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms. By CHARLTON LAIRD. Henry Holt. Pp. 957. \$4.95.

A dictionary of synonyms and antonyms based on the living language in popular use today. Contains 12,930 separate entries.

Radio News Writing. By WILLIAM F. BROOKS. McGraw-Hill. Pp. 200. \$2.74.

A new volume in the NBC-Columbia University Broadcasting Series. Designed to be a practical guide for beginners. Fundamentals are covered, pitfalls pointed out.

English Grammar: Indexed for Writers Today. By J. FOREST CRAIG. Long's College Book Co., Columbus, Ohio. Pp. 316.

Planned primarily for students needing a review of English grammar or desiring a concise summary of its working principles.

Speaking Effectively. By LEE NORVELLE and RAYMOND G. SMITH. Longman's, Green. Pp. 238. \$2.75.

A text for the beginning course in speech, in which methods of sound speech composition are emphasized. Illustrated with photographs.

Speech Criticism. By LESTER THONSEN and A. CRAIG BAIRD. Ronald Press. Pp. 542. \$5.00.

Designed as a text for a college course in speech criticism, the discussion is divided into five sections under the general headings of "The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism," "The Development of Rhetorical Theory," "The Methods of the Critics," "Preliminary Aspects of Rhetorical Criticism," and "The Standards of Judgment."

English Thought in the Nineteenth Century. By D. C. SOMERVELL. 5th ed. Longman's, Green. Pp. 241. \$2.50.

A volume which may be used as a companion both to history and to literature, since it gives a general picture of both the intellectual and psychological aspects of the period.

Warrior Bard: The Life of William Morris. By EDWARD and STEPANI GODWIN. Chanticleer Press. Pp. 175. \$2.50. Illustrated by the authors.

The Godwins are artists who live in the famous Morris house, Kelmscott Manor, and were friends of Miss May Morris, William's daughter. Through her they had access to materials both oral and written which they have incorporated with others into this book, and these are all good. But this reviewer found the style most trying, flopping about uneasily somewhere between that of the familiar essay and that of biographical fiction and achieving neither successfully. On the other hand, the drawings, the printing, and the paper are lovely.

The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe. Edited by JOHN WARD OSTROM. 2 vols. Harvard University Press. Pp. 664. \$10.

The first really full and exact edition of Poe's letters, probably definitive—a volume of first importance to students of American literature and a pleasure for the general reader.

The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1816-1878. Edited by HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS. 2 vols. Harvard University Press. \$12.50.

The volumes reprint manuscript letters and other materials in the notable Harvard Keats Collection which have to do with the life and work of the poets and his friends, about Milnes and his biography, and about the group of editors and writers who made the *London Magazine* famous. Especially important for students but enjoyable for all.

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Guide through the Romantic Movement. By ERNEST BERNBAUM. 2d ed. Ronald Press. Pp. 351. \$3.00.

Revised and enlarged, though general views remain about the same.

Typical Elizabethan Plays. By Contemporaries and Immediate Successors of Shakespeare. 3d ed. Rev. and enl. by the late FÉLIX E. SCHELLING and MATTHEW W. BLACK. Harper's. Pp. 1065.

Changes include a new introductory essay, "On Reading Elizabethan Plays," and extensions of the introductions to individual plays.

Composition for College Students. By JOSEPH M. THOMAS, FREDERICK A. MANCHESTER, and FRANKLIN W. SCOTT. 5th ed. Macmillan. Pp. 776.

General character remains the same. Changes chiefly in making illustrations topical.

Moby Dick. By HERMAN MELVILLE. Edited by WILFRED THORP. Oxford University Press. Pp. xviii+532+17.

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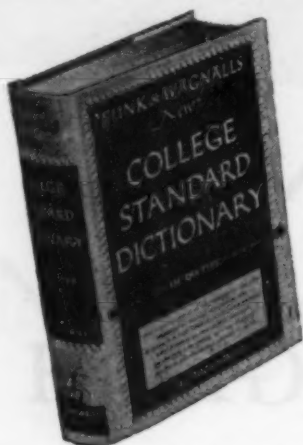
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